THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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MIDLANDS ZONE

NOVEMBER 2019

ISSUE 271

THE POSI+TIVE ISSUE

UNDETECTABLE = UNTRANSMITTABLE

Birmingham LGBT
Supported by umbrella

S.E.X.

An Evening of Comedy & Conversation

Featuring hilarious comedy acts

Hosted by

Miss Marty

Aaron Twitchen

Annette Fagon

A panel of experts in sexual health will be taking questions from the audience on all things sexual health. An event for National HIV Testing Week by Birmingham LGBT supported by Umbrella.

NOVEMBER
19

Book your place:
blgbtsextalk.eventbrite.co.uk
Tickets only £1
(Includes entry into prize draw)

COMEDY SHOW

eden

6pm–10pm at
Eden bar, 116 Sherlock St
Birmingham, B5 6NB

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Book Of Mormon coming to Birmingham Gay Village

The Book Of Mormon, Broadway's smash-hit musical written by Trey Parker, Matt Stone and Robert Lopez, is coming to Birmingham Hippodrome in the city's Gay Village next year, from 4 to 28 March.

Trey Parker and Matt Stone are the creators of award-winning television show South Park. Robert Lopez co-created Broadway musical Avenue Q and also co-wrote the songs for Disney's Frozen and Coco.

The Book Of Mormon follows a mismatched pair of Mormon boys who are sent on a mission to deliver the news of the Latter Day saints to the people of a Ugandan village - a place where war, famine, poverty and Aids are far more of a concern than religion.

The show features a number of memorable songs, including Spooky Mormon Hell Dream, I Am Africa, Baptize Me, All American Prophet and Tomorrow Is A Latter Day.

For tickets, visit thebookofmormonmusical.com, birminghamhippodrome.com or call 0844 338 5000

Let's talk about S.E.X!

Laughter, chat and SEX will come together in a special event at Birmingham's Eden Bar this month.

Presented as part of National Health Testing Week (17 - 23 November), S.E.X - An Evening Of Comedy And Conversation features local comedians Aaron Twitchen and Annette Fagon. Aaron and Annette will be doing their utmost to inspire each member of their audience to delve into their 'sexual self'!

The aim of the show is for everyone to feel sexy and confident about all things sexual - something that's sure to be helped along by Miss Marty (pictured), who'll be hosting the evening.

The event takes place at Eden on 19 November. Tickets are just £1 and include automatic entry into a prize draw where you could win clothing vouchers or a meal for two.

For more information, visit blgbtsextalk.eventbrite.co.uk

SHOCK NEWS! Birmingham Gay Village venue closes

Bar Jester, one of the oldest gay venues in Birmingham, closed its doors in the middle of last month for what could be the very last time.

Owner Michael Edge - who also owns The Core, another gay venue in the city, which is set to close next year - was unavailable for comment.

However, Bar Jester General Manager Gareth Murphy took to social media to write: "After six-and-a-half years at Bar Jester, it's time to say goodbye. I want to say a big thank you to everyone who supported myself and my team through the years, but an even bigger thank you to all the customers who supported Bar Jester."

Brum treat for Judy fans...

A tribute to gay icon and movie legend Judy Garland is stopping off in Birmingham next spring.

The Music Of Judy sees leading lady Rachel Tucker joined by an all-singing all-dancing West End ensemble and the London Concert Orchestra to perform numbers made famous by the much-loved Wizard Of Oz star.

Songs featured in the show include Over The Rainbow, The Man That Got Away, The Trolley Song, Puttin' On The Ritz and Get Happy.

The concert is hosted by Good Morning Britain's Richard Arnold, who will be taking a look back at Judy's remarkable career.

The Music Of Judy shows at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Friday 22 May.

Have ya heard?

It's finally happened! Same-sex marriage gets the thumbs-up in Northern Ireland

Same-sex marriage is legal in Northern Ireland - at last!

With the Northern Ireland Executive having been suspended since 2017 due to the collapse of the power-sharing agreement between the DUP and Sinn Féin, the UK Parliament earlier this year passed a law stating that same-sex marriage would become legal unless a new Northern Ireland Executive was formed before 21 October, something which didn't happen.

Although same-sex marriage became legal in Northern Ireland from midnight on 22 October, the first weddings won't take place until Valentine's Day next year.

Commenting on the news, Amnesty International Northern Ireland director and Love Equality campaigner Patrick Corrigan said: "After years of campaigning, marriage equality in Northern Ireland has finally become a reality. This is an incredible moment for so many people, especially for those couples who will now be treated as equal citizens in their own country.

"Within a few short months, same-sex couples here will be tying the knot. That is a great cause for celebration - for them, their families, and for all who have led and supported this campaign for equality."

Queer Film Festival 2020 on the lookout for new submissions

Birmingham's CineQ Queer Film Festival is now accepting short and feature film submissions for its second edition, taking place next year.

CineQ 2020 will present a series of queer films at various city-centre venues, with each movie showcasing 'diverse perspectives'.

Interested in contributing a movie? Then send your film to the team at info@CineQBirmingham.co.uk. Deadline for entries is 21 November. For more info, check out cineqbirmingham.co.uk

Image is for Sauvage, which showed at CineQ in 2019

WORLD OF WONDER & VOSS EVENTS PRESENT

RuPaul's DRAG RACE UK

SEASON 1 TOUR

HOSTED BY ALYSSA EDWARDS

01 DECEMBER / BIRMINGHAM

THE ALEXANDRA

TICKETS AT ATGTICKETS.COM/BIRMINGHAM

VOSS @vossevents #vossevents

WORLD OF WONDER

The ALEXANDRA EST. SINCE 1901

Have ya heard?

Birmingham schools equality lessons row played out in the high court

Shakeel Afsar

The ongoing row concerning the teaching of lessons containing information about LGBT relationships was played out in the high court last month.

A five-day hearing was held to decide whether a temporary exclusion zone in the area immediately around Birmingham primary school Anderton Park should be made permanent.

The exclusion zone came into force during the summer term to stop parents and activists from protesting outside the school gates.

The predominantly Muslim school has been at the centre of the LGBT-lessons controversy which has also engulfed another Birmingham primary, Parkfield Community School.

The protesters' perspective is that the lessons about LGBT relationships are not age-appropriate and are at odds with the religious views of the majority of Muslim parents.

As well as demonstrating against the lessons, the protesters have also demanded the resignation of Anderton Park's head teacher, Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson.

The school has been teaching the lessons for several years.

At the end of the high court hearing, the man charged with the task of making a decision about the exclusion zone, Judge Mr Justice Warby, reserved judgement and said that he would announce the outcome in writing "as soon as possible".

Coventry gay venue getting a revamp

The downstairs area of The Yard in Coventry is undergoing a complete remodelling and will benefit from the addition of an all-year-round garden area.

Work has already begun inside the bar. This will see improvements being made to the general layout and brand new staging being added.

Speaking to Midlands Zone, General Manager Darren Piper said: "A new multi-functional stage in the downstairs bar will enable us to offer live entertainment, including our weekly cabaret, to more customers, including those who are currently unable to access the upstairs club. Alongside cabaret, we will also be using the stage for quizzes, our weekly karaoke and live acoustic nights.

"Once work on the inside area is completed, we're looking forward to making changes to the outside garden area, which will help ensure it can be used throughout the winter months."

NHS

ONE

FINGERPRICK

AND

20 MINUTES

IS ALL IT TAKES TO TEST FOR

HIV

GET A FREE HIV TEST IN STOKE-ON-TRENT FOR HIV TESTING WEEK

20MINTESTING.CO.UK

World Aids Day

Sunday 1 December 2019

FEATURING
Birmingham Drag Queens:

BLANCHE
DIVINE MISS M
AMY LAQUEEFA
TWIGGY
ASHLEIGH MARC
DOMINUS VON VEXO
GINNY LEMON
MISS MARTY
PORK PIE
MISS PENNY
LACEY LOU
PAM CATZ
QUEENY
JENNA DAVINCI
BLACK PEPPA
PAUL ALEKSANDR
DAHLIAH RIVERS
YSHEE BLACK

Photographer:
Laura Chen

THE POSITIVE ISSUE

Positive to be Positive

Terrence Higgins Trust ambassador Andrew Gámez-Heath chats to Midlands Zone about how his HIV diagnosis led to him helping others given the same news...

Age: 35

Where you're from: Whitby, North Yorkshire

Where you reside now: Lincoln, East Midlands

Relationship status: Married

Five words that describe you best: Happy, outgoing, loyal, fun, talkative

When did you first find out that you were HIV-positive?

I was diagnosed on the 25th of November 2014. It's a day I will never forget. I was living in London at the time and had just entered into a new relationship, so thought it would be a good idea to get a sexual health screening. It was also National HIV Testing Week, so there was plenty of advertising around the city encouraging people to get tested. My partner booked an appointment, I went with him and asked if I could be tested at the same time. That day you could only get a screening if you'd pre-booked your appointment. However, I was told if I went across the road to their 'express' clinic I could get tested there. So off I went on my own. I wasn't worried in the slightest, as I'd had a negative test three months earlier. I did all the usual swabs and then, at the end, I saw a nurse, who did my finger-prick point-of-care test for HIV. It was then that I was told that the test had come back reactive.

What was your initial reaction?

It felt like my world had just fallen apart. There were a lot of tears and lots of uncertainty. At the time, I knew absolutely nothing about HIV, so my first question was, 'How long have I got left?', to which the nurse replied, 'The same amount of time you always had.' I thought it was a death sentence and had no idea just how far we've come in the fight against HIV. I then asked them to call my new partner across the road and he came straight over. As soon as I told him, he just gave me a massive hug and told me that everything was going to be okay.

How long until you told friends and family?

I didn't really tell anyone about it for a long time. In fact, I didn't tell my mum for about 18 months. I had asked my consultant very early on how I should tell my mum, and I remember her saying to me, 'Why do you need to tell your mum?' I replied with something about how I thought HIV was a big deal and that I therefore felt she should know. The consultant then asked how I thought my mum would react if I told her. I said straight away that she would go to pieces, as she didn't know much more about it than what happened in the 1980s and '90s. My consultant advised me to wait until I had all the answers to all of the questions that my mum was likely to ask before I told her. At the time, I was the one who needed the support and the time to get my head around things. If I'd told her too soon, then I would've been the one giving the support. Three years after receiving my diagnosis, there were still only a handful of people who knew about it. I decided on the third anniversary of my diagnosis that I was going to be a bit more open about it, so I decided to post it on my Facebook. I just wanted friends and family to know, and to give them the opportunity to ask questions and get a conversation going. The main reason for doing it was to educate them, so that they also knew the facts.

What were their initial reactions?

When I told my mum, she reacted exactly how I expected her to - she did go to pieces! However, I was able to give her lots of reassurance and she very quickly realised that I would be absolutely fine. As for the Facebook post, I got the most incredible reaction ever; So much love and support from everybody, and not one single negative comment. That status was liked and shared all over the world, which led to a journalist asking to write an article about me 'going public'.

And now?

After the article was written, it was published in the Daily Mail, the Daily Mirror and Metro, all on the same day. After that, things went a little bit crazy doing interviews for ITV news and various other news outlets. I never

expected it to go that far, but I was getting a positive message across, and I knew that I had a responsibility to speak up

What challenges - physical, mental, social - have you faced since your diagnosis?

I haven't suffered from any physical challenges whatsoever. Having HIV has never stopped me doing anything. The virus is still highly stigmatised, so I've been asked a lot of inappropriate questions since going public. Some people living with HIV get really offended when they're asked these things, but it really doesn't bother me at all. I used to be one of those people who knew nothing about the virus, and I probably would've said the wrong thing at some point as well. I just try to use these opportunities to educate the other person. I'm also just grateful that the person is willing to speak about HIV, as a lot of people won't even approach the subject.

How have you come to terms with it?

Having the knowledge and education early on after my diagnosis meant I was able to come to terms with it quite quickly These days, thanks to the medication we have, it's easier to treat the virus than it is to get rid of the stigma. My diagnosis led me to a complete change of career, and I now work for a HIV organisation in Lincoln. I wanted to give back and help others who may be struggling with their diagnosis, and also to educate as many people as possible and let them know the facts. There are so many people out there who still don't know that somebody living with HIV who is on successful treatment can't pass on the virus to their sexual partners. That is a real game-changer when it comes to combating stigma, and knowing that fact really helped me get my head around my own diagnosis.

Has your diagnosis changed your outlook on life?

When I was first diagnosed, I thought it was the worst thing that had ever happened to me. It sounds crazy, but now, when I look at things, I can honestly say that having HIV is potentially one of the best things that's ever happened to me. I'm happier and healthier than I've ever been in my life. It's also led me to work in sexual health, which I absolutely love. But above all, going public with my status has given me a platform to publicise a positive message on a scale I could never have imagined. I've worked on some incredible national campaigns with Terrence Higgins Trust, and have even travelled to Luxembourg to have meetings about HIV at the European Commission. It's also allowed me to show everyone that you can have a completely normal and happy life living with HIV.

Are you honest from the outset when you have new encounters?

Remember the guy who I'd just started seeing when I went for the test and I got my diagnosis? Well, things went from strength to strength and in 2016 we ended up getting married. We're in a monogamous relationship, so I haven't needed to tell anyone about my status when it comes to sex. If I were single, I wouldn't have a problem telling someone, but not everybody would feel comfortable disclosing. At the end of the day, someone s HIV status is no one else's business. As long as the person is taking their medication and therefore undetectable, they can't pass it on anyway. We live in a world nowadays where we can use treatment as prevention, as well as PrEP for HIV-negative people. Combine that with condom use and regular testing, and it empowers people to look after themselves and their partners, and to have sex without fear or worry

What advice would you give to someone who's recently found out they're positive?

Don't panic; you are going to be absolutely fine. Your life is going to be no different than it was before. Secondly, you've done nothing wrong. For some people, treating the virus and becoming undetectable can happen so quickly that your brain is still trying to catch up, but I promise you that you will be okay.

What support have you received, and who's it been from?

My family, friends and husband have been fantastic. Positive Health, who I work for in Lincoln, were great as well. And all the love and support and the messages I get from strangers means so much still.

What needs to change to remove the stigma around the virus?

I cannot stress enough how important it is to educate people about HIV. People need to know that undetectable equals untransmittable. A person living with HIV on an effective treatment cannot pass the virus on. It s a ZERO risk! When people learn this, the first thing they say to me is, 'Oh my god, that s amazing, how come people don't know this?' It instantly removes the stigma and actually should be celebrated. If we had a treatment today that was just one tablet and would treat cancer by shrinking the tumor down to a size that we were unable to detect, then it would be global news. Yet we have that for HIV and the majority of the population don't know about it, which I find so sad and frustrating.

What's positive about being positive?

Being able to combat stigma and having the knowledge that HIV doesn't have to stop you doing anything.

Andrew and his husband, Ricardo, who he met not long before his diagnosis

The BAREBACKING truth of it...

UNDETECTABLE =

"If everyone knew the facts, we could bring an end to stigma around HIV, and stop HIV transmissions altogether"

97%

of people living with HIV in the UK have an undetectable viral load and CAN'T PASS IT ON!

UNTRANSMITTABLE

Did you know that someone who is HIV-positive but with an undetectable viral load is probably the SAFEST person you can possibly have sex with?

Many people, even a significant number within the LGBTQ+ community, still aren't aware that individuals who are HIV-positive but undetectable CANNOT pass on the virus, even if they go bareback rather than using a condom - and that's a FACT!

Still don't believe us?
Okay, well, let us explain...

How is this possible?

The likelihood of passing on HIV is directly linked to the amount of the virus that you have in your blood. The lower the amount, the lower the chance of passing it on.

When taken correctly, HIV treatment reduces the amount of virus in someone's blood. When reduced to extremely low levels - to the point where a laboratory test can't pick it up - the virus cannot be passed on.

This low level of virus in the blood is what's called an 'undetectable viral load'. Different laboratories have different cut-off points when classifying an undetectable viral load, but most clinics in the UK classify 'undetectable' as being below 20 copies of HIV virus per millilitre.

A key goal of treatment is to get everybody who's living with HIV to a stage where they have an undetectable viral load. Being undetectable doesn't mean there's no HIV present, but it does mean that people with the virus can look forward to living long and healthy lives.

Is there any proof?

Although scientists and doctors have been observing this over the last 20 years, it's only in recent major studies and through extensive research that it has been officially proven.

The PARTNER study looked at 888 gay and straight couples (and 58,000 sex acts) across many countries. Each couple comprised one partner who was HIV-positive and on treatment and one who was HIV negative. Results showed that where the HIV positive partner had an undetectable viral load, there were no cases of HIV transmission via either anal or vaginal sex without a condom. The PARTNER study defined undetectable as meaning fewer than 20 copies of HIV virus per millilitre.

It can take up to six months from beginning treatment to become undetectable.

This message has the backing of UNAIDS, Public Health England and hundreds of other leading public health experts and organisations worldwide.

OK, so what does this mean for me?

The message about undetectable viral load is so important because it helps us understand the progress that's been made in terms of addressing the issue of HIV and reducing its stigma.
Here are a few things you can do to help:

Spread the word

The more people who know about this, the better the chance of beating HIV stigma. The great news is that in the UK, around 97% of people living with HIV who are diagnosed and are taking medication have an undetectable viral load - meaning that they can't pass it on. This surpasses the UN global target of 90% of people on HIV medication having an undetectable viral load.

Get tested

It's important to get tested for HIV regularly, as it's the only way to know for sure if you have the virus. If you do have it, the earlier you find out, the sooner you can access life-saving treatment and support.

In most cases HIV is passed on because people aren't aware that they have it. The longer you live with undiagnosed HIV, the more likely it is to seriously damage your immune system.

So get tested today!

NATIONAL HIV TESTING WEEK

16-22 NOVEMBER 2019

GIVE HIV THE FINGER

A finger-prick test is all it takes.

Terrence Higgins Trust

It Starts With Me

ORDER A FREE POSTAL TEST OR FIND WHERE TO TEST

StartsWithMe.org.uk

DR RANJ SINGH

Austin Armacost shows his support for THT's campaign by giving the finger to HIV

National HIV Testing Week: 16-23 Nov

It's time to get tested

With National HIV Testing Week starting on Saturday 16 November, it's time to ask ourselves that all-important question: When was the last time I got tested?

The Midlands and the East of England region have the country's second highest proportion (23%) of new HIV diagnoses, after London. In addition to this, gay and bisexual men accounted for 50% of all those diagnosed in 2018, according to Public Health England. After seeing these stats, we're sure you don't need us to tell you why it's important to get tested!

The sooner you get tested, the better. Late diagnosis means that you've tested positive for HIV after the virus has already started to damage your immune system.

Finding out about a HIV positive status allows you to start treatment and stop any irreversible damage to your health. So if you do *only one thing* this month, make sure it's to go and get tested.

When should I test for HIV?

There's no direct answer to this question. Getting tested should be seen as something we all do to ensure we maintain good sexual health. You can live a long, healthy life with HIV - but first you've got to know your status

It's recommended that gay and bi men get tested routinely for HIV and other STIs at least annually - or every three months if having sex without condoms with new or casual partners.

Why should I get tested?

It's important to get tested for HIV regularly, as testing is the only way to know for sure if you have the virus.

A majority of people who pass on HIV don't know that they have it.

If you do have the virus, finding out means that you can start treatment, stay healthy and avoid passing it on to anybody else. People who are diagnosed early and access effective treatment can go on to live long and healthy lives

Where can I go to get tested?

To find out where to test near you, or to order a free self testing kit so that you can do it yourself at home, visit startswithme.org.uk.

How can I get tested?

Gone are the days when the only way you could get tested was by booking an appointment at your local GP surgery There are now more ways than ever to test for HIV. With walk in clinics, test kits and community testing available, you're sure to find the way that works best for you.

Test kits are fairly new, so some people still don't really understand how they work. Here's a little breakdown.

Postal testing kits involve you taking a sample yourself and sending it off to a lab, which will then contact you with your result.

Self testing kits give you the results within a few minutes, without you having to send anything off.

National HIV Testing Week is coordinated by Terrence Higgins Trust on behalf of Public Health England. For more information about where to test and how to go about seeking support, go to: startswithme.org.uk.

To keep up to date with National HIV Testing Week, follow @startswith_me and @THTorguk on social media.

BEING POSITIVE IN A NEGATIVE WORLD

Nathaniel Hall's First Time, showing as part of Birmingham's SHOUT Festival, is a one-man performance piece about contracting HIV during his first sexual encounter, aged just 16. Midlands Zone caught up with Nathaniel to chat about his show and find out more about being positive in a negative world...

Looking back, had you considered the risks of contracting HIV going into your first sexual encounter?

I did know about HIV and Aids at 16. I'd had a very sketchy sex education, but there was nothing in that education that was relevant to gay men. Section 28 - the legislation Thatcher's government introduced in 1986, the year I was born - was still in place and stopped schools from talking about homosexuality in a positive manner. This was scrapped in 2003 by the then-Labour government, so I lived all the way through my school life with that legislation. It was actually very difficult for schools to talk about safer sex for gay men because it was a completely different ball game...excuse the pun! The only sex education I had about being gay was a video that our maths teacher, who was completely out of her depth on this subject, showed of a gay man who was dying of Aids. At that time I was trying to make sense of my sexuality, and I was getting this message that gay men just get Aids and die anyway, so what was the point. So when I met Sam (not his real name), who was the first openly gay person who gave me attention, it was completely intoxicating. All of a sudden there was this rare almost-exotic creature - something I knew inside my head that I was myself, or wanted to be - giving me attention. Plus, he was older. So he was leading the way and guiding me into this world of being gay. So when it came to the sex, I knew what the risks were, but I didn't necessarily connect them with what was happening. Even with the very poor straight-sex education we had, there was still no open discussion about sex, or encouragement to talk to your partner before sex, so I didn't really have the capacity or the self-confidence to suggest trying one thing or another. That relates both to safer sex and just the sex that you want - actually negotiating what you want to do. I was very much aware of the risks, but in a theoretical removed-from-reality kind of way

What made you get tested?

I went on my last holiday with my parents that summer and I got really, really ill in the second week with a fever, vomiting and diarrhoea. We thought I'd probably eaten something dodgy or caught a virus, and the doctors said the same when I got back home. It did pass, like the doctors said it would. When I started college that autumn, I began getting other symptoms, like soreness, itchiness and discharge downstairs. I started to realise something wasn't right and went to the clinic for tests. Back in 2003, HIV was an opt-in test, whereas now it's opt-out. So it was actually quite easy for me to refuse the HIV test because I was terrified and in denial that it could happen to me. They did all the other tests, but I was presenting with all the signs of HIV and eventually the doctor convinced me to have the test. I probably contracted the virus around June 2003 and was diagnosed two weeks before my 17th birthday - so October 2003. A lot of people don't catch it that quick, but it's so important to be diagnosed as soon as possible. I think it's really important to know that while I had quite a severe initial illness when first exposed to the virus, and even lost a stone in weight, most people just develop a mild flu and then they bounce back. So that's why regular testing is so important if you're sexually active because you probably won't know you have it from any symptoms

What was your initial reaction to your diagnosis?

I always describe it as like being hit by a truck. Being diagnosed was a very traumatic experience. At 16 it was particularly scary. I remember crying a lot. In 2003, being diagnosed meant you were told you had a prognosis of 37 years. I was unfortunate because I was right at the end of the time where that was the information which was given out. Not long afterwards, they wouldn't have said that because HIV healthcare is constantly changing and improving. But I was told my HIV was a fatal illness and that there was a figure you could place on that. To be confronted with your own mortality at 16 is very traumatic.

How long did it take for you to tell others about your diagnosis, and how did they react?

I did tell partners. I went into another relationship not long after my diagnosis That relationship lasted eight years and he remained HIV-negative but knew my status. I told some friends too, but it was very much on a need-to-know basis. I kept it secret and didn't tell my family. It was 14 years later, so 2017, when I went public with my status I think I had a little bit of a mental breakdown in 2017

INTERVIEW CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

> Me coming out and saying it paves the way for others to do the same, breaking stigma down so people don't feel that shame around the virus.

Nathaniel at 16, the age he contracted the HIV virus...

I joke in the show that I did a Britney, but I thankfully didn't shave off my hair! I was in a bad relationship, I was partying too much, my work was suffering and my mental health also. I wasn't looking after myself properly, but it seemed like I was living my best queer life. In First Time you meet me at this point. I catch myself in the mirror two days after a house party - still having not slept and living in my dressing gown - and I don't recognise myself anymore. That's when I decided that something needed to change, so I actually started writing stuff for the show before I told anyone because I just needed to start processing it. Then I applied for a commission at Waterside Arts in Greater Manchester and, unexpectedly, I was successful. I realised I needed to finally tell my family; so I told my mum, dad, two older brothers and sister via a letter. The response was really underwhelming. My family were all so loving and supportive. I think the power of the stigma surrounding it and the shame of being HIV+ stopped me from being able to say it for so long, even though I couldn't have expected my family to react in any other way than they did.

What's been the biggest hurdle that you've had to overcome since being exposed to the virus?

The biggest hurdle is definitely mental; for most people the physical effects of HIV are very manageable. Medications are highly effective, and most people find a combination that works for them and their lifestyle. I think it was really highlighted for me by a magazine headline that read something like, 'I got HIV at 16, but it was the stigma not the virus that led me to breaking point'. That's the crux of the matter; a confident, openly gay man like myself took 14 years to say out loud that I was HIV+ - and to say it with absolutely no shame whatsoever. It's a virus and I caught it. It wasn't my fault. It wasn't his fault. It just happened. The ongoing emotional trauma is still there from that, but it's about overcoming that self-blame that comes with being HIV+. I know a lot of other people who live with HIV, and the way they contracted it is very different to how I did, but I can tell you across the board that every single one of them has said they feel ashamed. Me coming out and saying it paves the way for others to do the same, breaking stigma down so that people don't feel a sense of shame about having the virus.

Is there less stigma surrounding being HIV+ now than when you found out about your positive status?

I think in the gay community we're light years ahead in terms of talking about sex, being sex positive, talking about STIs. That's not to say that there isn't still stigma and discrimination within our own community, because there is I've faced that on dating apps and with people trolling me online. But I think there's a revolution happening. My HIV community is gaining in confidence We've known for a long time that we are not the problem; the people who know they're HIV+ are not the people passing it on. Now we categorically know that undetectable equals untransmittable (U=U). If you're on effective medication and your viral load is undetectable, which means it's less than 40 copies per mm cubed of blood, you cannot pass the virus on. In terms of HIV, I'm the safest person you can have sex with because you're guaranteed not to contract it. That's a revolution in terms of fighting stigma and misinformation. There's scientific proof, and that gives me a confidence to challenge people who don't believe the HIV+ community. I think it's great that we've had some high-profile people go public. Lloyd Russell Moyes announced in the House of Commons that he's HIV+. Then we had Gareth Thomas. Unfortunately he was forced to say it, which is definitely more evidence of stigma and discrimination. But he's really going on to inspire a lot of other people now. I'm waiting for a high-profile woman to come out and say they're HIV+ because I think that would really help too

When did you decide you wanted to take your story to the stage?

A few friends of mine - other solo and performance artists - had been telling me for a long time that my story needed to be told. Also, I do a lot of work with helping people tell their stories at other theatre companies and organisations - painful or difficult stories in particular. I sometimes ask people to do quite radical things, so I decided I needed to practise what I preach. Then, despite the fact I wasn't open about my status, I was doing a lot of public speaking on behalf of the George House Trust - a HIV charity in Manchester. I'm on their Positively Speaking Programme, and we go out to schools, staff training days and GP

surgeries to tell our stories about living with HIV so that we can help and educate people from the patient's perspective. I was carefully managing where I was doing that so that I wasn't found out, but seeing the power of people saying it out loud really encouraged me to do the same. A lot of people we spoke to for the programme had never met, or knowingly met, someone who's HIV+, so it was about them realising that we are exactly the same as any other person, with the same hopes, ambitions and fears. That was hugely powerful, and it made me realise that doing First Time was really important. The act of performing my story is what's important for me, so that people living with HIV can see other people standing up and saying it without shame.

And how would you describe First Time?

Some reviewers have described it as 'hilarious and heartbreaking in equal measure', 'a joy to watch and a total cry-fest' and 'an emotional tumble drier'. That last one especially is a really strange but great way of putting it. The show is very funny. I think there's humour hidden in even the darkest places, and you're never too far from a laugh in First Time. It also has fabulous storytelling, some bad drag, audience participation and moments of quiet reflection, but it ends in a really hopeful place. No one will go away feeling too emotionally drained afterwards because it's really important to me that my audience has a space in which to feel positive about the future. Although my story is predominantly a HIV+ gay man's story, the show is universal in many other ways. A lot of people come away and find that the show has really touched them, regardless of whether they identify as a gay male or not. It has really strong ties with parenting and relationships with children; it has some banging noughties soundtracks too - so if you're nostalgic for that era, you definitely won't be disappointed! It's funny, educational and really moving. I'd be thrilled to see Midlands Zone readers there

How did you get involved with SHOUT Festival?

I met Adam Carver at an LGBTQ+ artist networking event. That was around the time when I was doing the show in Waterside. But he couldn't make it, so I asked him to come see it at Edinburgh Fringe. But given the response the show had already received in 2018, Adam wanted to book it despite not having seen it, which is very trusting! I'm absolutely delighted to be a part of SHOUT. Actually, the show is a little bit after the festival is supposed to end, so it's very kind of them to still include me

If you could get just one message out there for World Aids Day (1 December), what would it be?

If you've been recently diagnosed as HIV+, I would say you need to reach out and talk to other people who are going through the same experience. Don't do what I did. Don't isolate yourself, put it in a box on the shelf and forget about it because it will catch up with you at some point, even if you think you're coping with it. Talk to other people, ask questions and share your experiences with one another. I would always advise people to be open about their HIV status. I understand that I'm in a position of privilege in terms of being safe to be open about it, and I completely understand why that isn't an option for others. But if you can be that person who opens up about it and stands up and says 'I'm HIV+', then do so. For me, it's been a positive experience on the whole. But most of all, be kind to yourself and seek out help and support when you need it.

And what's your response to National HIV Testing Week, which starts on 16 November?

I'm an advocate for each individual making their own informed choices when it comes to sex. I think it's really important for people to choose the right way to practise safer sex for themselves. Obviously the most effective way to prevent HIV and other STIs is to abstain from sex, which a lot of people really don't see as an option! Then there's condoms that stop most sexually transmitted infections, but it's only about 83% effective at stopping HIV transmission in gay men. They're not 100% effective, but they're still a really good tool. Now we also have PREP, which, if taken preemptively, can stop you contracting HIV before you're exposed to the virus. There's also PEP, which can be taken for 72 hours after exposure, to stop HIV. There's a lot of criticism around the drugs because there's a lot of slut-shaming going on, with claims being made that people are just taking these drugs and then going out and sleeping around. Taking PREP means that you have to go see a doctor every six months to get checked for HIV, which I think is always positive because you're engaging with sexual health clinics and taking responsibility for your sexual health. People are saying that these drugs mean the gay community is having more sex, but I think that's only a great thing! To have loads of sex without fear is amazing! I think the connection being made between sexually transmitted infections and the amount of sex people are morally allowed to have - which doesn't even exist - is ridiculous. Engage with your local sexual health service and ask the nurses what the best plan of attack is for you. Then you can talk about that with your partner(s) to decide what you want and don't want sexually, and how best to protect yourselves and each other. Talk, talk, talk! And get tested!

Nathaniel Hall's First Time is at the Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, on Thursday 21 & Friday 22 November. The show is part of SHOUT Festival of Queer Arts & Culture.

Coinciding with National HIV Testing Week, the Friday performance will include a post-show discussion with Dr David White from the Birmingham Heartlands HIV Service.

NIGHTINGALE50

Remember your first time at The Nightingale?

Have you got memories, photos, or objects from the Gale you want to share?

Do you want to volunteer for a fantastic new LGBTQ+ community heritage project?

Birmingham, we need you to get involved and help us bring the untold history of the city's oldest LGBTQ+ venue to life.

SHARE YOUR STORY

We are looking for people to share their experiences, the stories of unforgettable nights out dancing under the mirror ball to the last song of the night, opening up, last orders, bringing people together, finding a community, finding the dancefloor, finding yourself. Whatever your memories, we want to hear them.

We are also collecting photos, videos, flyers, posters and objects from across the Gale's history to be preserved in the archives.

VOLUNTEER

We are looking for a team of dedicated volunteers with a passion for Birmingham's local LGBTQ+ history to help make this happen.

Volunteers will be interviewing people, researching and recording histories, organising and archiving photos and objects, helping with events, and supporting the documentary being made. Full training will be provided.

If you're interested in being a part of Nightingale50 contact Adam Carver on Nightingale50@blgbt.org or call 0121 643 0821

Birmingham LGBT

HERITAGE FUND

#Nightingale50
@birminghamlgbt
@lgbtbirmingham
www.blgbt.org

Celebrities positively being HIV-positive

Jonathan Van Ness - American hairdresser (Queer Eye)

Magic Johnson - Basketball player

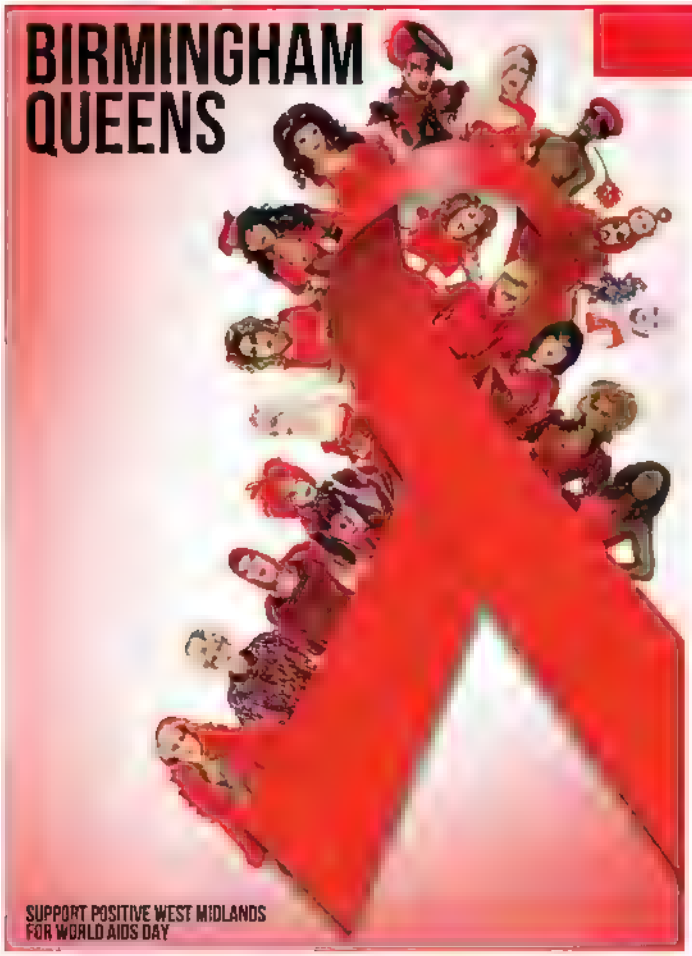
Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP

Andy Bell Musician

Gareth Thomas - Welsh rugby player

Charlie Sheen - Actor

Michael Stipe - Singer-songwriter

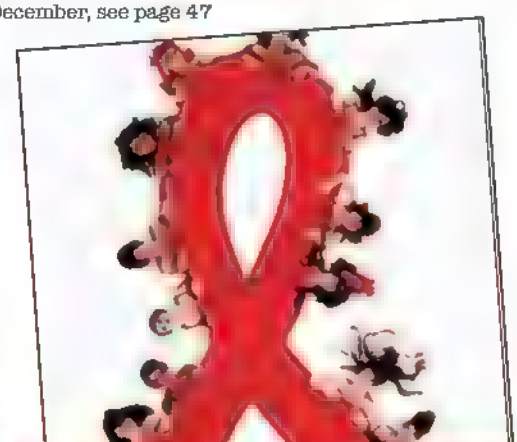


Well done, Blanche!

Birmingham drag hostess Blanche came up with a great poster idea for the charity Positive West Midlands - recreate an iconic 2005 World Aids Day poster-image of Birmingham drag queens and the famous red ribbon. The original poster was created by Dave Viney (see below)

So hey presto! Midlands Zone can exclusively reveal that Blanche's idea for 2019 has come to life thanks to photographer Laura Chen, graphic designer Lewis Henderson, and all the Birmingham drag queens who took part. And what a great poster it is! Well done to all involved!

To find out about a special Birmingham Gay Village pub crawl to raise funds for Positive West Midlands on Sunday 1 December, see page 47



World Aids Day poster created by Dave Viney in 2005

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Birmingham's SHOUT Festival of Queer Arts & Culture is back from Tuesday 5 to Sunday 17 November. Midlands Zone gives you the lowdown on some of the fantastic events taking place across the festival. And don't forget, you can head to shoutfestival.co.uk to find out more and purchase tickets.

QUEER AND NOW

BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE - SAT 9 NOVEMBER

A showcase evening of short work-in-progress performances from the next generation of queer Midlands theatremakers. Showcasing the extraordinary skill of LGBTQ+ artists from the region, the event features theatre, stand-up comedy, music, drag and all manner of performance yet to be imagined.

SHOUT 2019 OPENING PARTY

THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB - TUES 5 NOVEMBER

The launch party features the unveiling of two murals commissioned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Nightingale Club. The event also includes performances by a stellar line-up of queer cabaret acts and a screening of Hedwig And The Angry Inch.

REEL HERSTORIES: REBEL DYKES AND THE ARCHIVETTES

THE LOFT, BIRMINGHAM - WED 6 NOVEMBER

An evening of screenings looking at the ways queer women have used film to preserve the stories of their communities - and the ways in which women have (and have not) been represented in film. Including talks with filmmakers and archivists, the show features documentaries Extracts From Rebel Dykes and The Archivettes

DEEP IN VOGUE

THE NIGHTINGALE, BIRMINGHAM - THURS 7 NOVEMBER

A chance to catch new documentary Deep In Vogue, which celebrates the colourful, queer, emotional and political stories of Northern Vogue and its people. Performers from the film will be in attendance, talking about the UK's vogue scene and making space for queer people of colour

HIT THE ODE | SHOUT TAKEOVER

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME - FRI 8 NOVEMBER

This unique performance-poetry night boasts a 'knock-out line-up of queer spoken word artists', including Jay Hulme, Keith Jarrett, Dean Atta and Jackie Hagan.

SADIE CLARK | ALGORITHMS

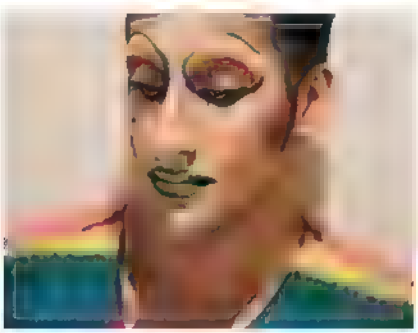
THE OLD JOINT STOCK THEATRE - SUN 10 NOVEMBER

A bisexual Bridget Jones for the online generation, this tragicomic one-woman play is ideal for anyone who's wondered why they feel so lonely at a point in time when connecting with others is meant to be easier than ever.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? QUEERNESS & FAITH

BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM & ART GALLERY - MON 11 NOVEMBER

A panel discussion, chaired by Amerah Saleh, that brings together artists from a range of religious backgrounds and practices to talk about what it means to be LGBTQ+ and religious. The panel will discuss how faith informs creative work, and how we might move the conversation forward



JAIVANT PATEL DANCE | YAATRA

MAC BIRMINGHAM - WED 13 NOVEMBER

British Indian artist Jaivant Patel presents a 'captivating blend' of solo Kathak and contemporary dance
A celebration of two cultures, his work explores the intersectionality of living in one culture while paying tribute to the traditions, heritage and often untold stories of another.

OF SHOUT FESTIVAL

A DIRTY SHAME

THE ELECTRIC CINEMA, BIRMINGHAM - WED 13 NOVEMBER

A late night screening of John Waters' A Dirty Shame. After getting hit on the head, an uptight middle-aged sexually repressed woman turns into a sex addict and falls into an underground subculture in suburban Baltimore. Starring Tracey Ullman and Johnny Knoxville.

JOHN WATERS | THIS FILTHY WORLD

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME - WED 13 NOVEMBER

John Waters visits Birmingham for the very first time with his one-man show Focusing on John's early, negative artistic influences and his fascination with true crime, exploitation films, fashion lunacy and the extremes of the contemporary art world, this joyously devious monologue - a homage to all that's trashy in life - is a call-to-arms to 'filth followers' everywhere.

A BOM BIRTHDAY

BIRMINGHAM OPEN MEDIA - THURS 14 NOVEMBER

A night of celebrations to mark Birmingham Open Media's fifth birthday and SHOUT Festival's 10th anniversary Expect an epic evening of music, arts, special guest performances and dancing.

ARE YOU PROUD?

MAC BIRMINGHAM - TUES 12 NOVEMBER

A screening of the recently released documentary celebrating decades of progress in the LGBTQ+ rights movement. The movie also asks difficult questions about the corporatisation of Pride, the existence of prejudice within the LGBTQ+ community, and how the future looks 50 years on from the Stonewall Riots.

SPLIT BRITCHES | UNEXPLODED ORDNANCES (UXO)

BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE - SAT 16 NOVEMBER

Two of the foremost figures in queer performance art and lesbian identity - Peggy Shaw and Louis Weaver (Split Britches) - combine a Dr Strangelove-inspired performance with a daring forum for public conversation.

SHOUT OUT COMMUNITY DAY

MAC BIRMINGHAM - SUN 17 NOVEMBER

A packed programme of live music, creative workshops, performances and crafting from local LGBTQ+ artists and community groups. Expect talks, activities and an opportunity to socialise - all for free. SHOUT OUT is also host to the annual and much-loved programme of short films.

FAB! THE FABULOUS KIDS PARTY

MAC BIRMINGHAM - SUN 17 NOVEMBER

This year's SHOUT OUT includes a daytime children's party featuring music, DIY costume-making, a variety of fun games, a disco and a host of glittery and colourful friends. Suitable for children aged 3+.

TRAVIS ALABANZA | BURGERZ

MAC BIRMINGHAM - SUN 17 NOVEMBER

Check out our interview with Travis on page 26 to find out more about this show

NATHANIEL HALL | FIRST TIME

THE OLD JOINT STOCK THEATRE - THURS 21 NOVEMBER

Check out our interview with Nathaniel on page 18 to find out more about this show

MORE THAN BURGERZ

Non-binary performance artist Travis Alabanza's new show, Burgerz, has been inspired by an incident in which they had a chicken burger thrown at them. Travis talks to Zone about dealing with transphobia ahead of bringing the show to Birmingham's SHOUT Festival and Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre...

How would you describe your art form?

I'd say it's always been bold, challenging and hopefully unique in its perspective and approach. I would also say that it's always in relationship to the audience

What do you hope people will take away from the experience of watching Burgerz?

The ability and desire to stand up for other people. I think what the show is trying to hone in on is that we can no longer be bystanders to each other in public. In this moment in time and in the current political climate we really do need to learn how to move past discomfort to stand up for other people

What shocked you more - the incident in which you were verbally abused and had a chicken burger hurled at you, or people's reaction to it?

People s reaction, definitely. The show actually doesn't talk about the incident in huge detail. It s more of a catalyst for what's happening during the show, which is cooking a burger on stage with a random volunteer each night. It's not a show to regurgitate all the violence I've experienced. What's stayed with me isn't the fact that a burger was thrown at me, it's more the fact that on a busy London bridge in broad daylight, people saw what happened and carried on walking by.

Do you have any understanding of why people did that?

It's complicated. There were lots of types of people on that bridge. There could have been someone who didn't respond because they thought someone else would. There could have been someone who didn't respond because they were afraid. The show touches on how we re facing a joint oppression a lot of the time between trans people and other marginalised people. But you know what? It's just gender. Some women know what it feels like to experience male violence and harassment on the street. Who knows whether someone chose not to respond through fear of it turning on them?

I think there's also a problem with transphobia being so in-built in us that sometimes, when we see gender non-conforming people experiencing violence - even if we don't think this is what we think - there's a subconscious impulse to blame gender non-conforming people for choosing to look like they do. Almost as though by wearing a dress and makeup while looking like a man, they're somehow asking for it. Who knows what goes through people s heads? .

How can society become more understanding of differences between people?

I think it s about not distancing ourselves from people who we're seeing as 'different'. Everyone needs to realise that we all have a relationship to our gender and we all have a relationship to our gender expression. I'm pretty sure that it s not just trans people who have a complicated relationship. I think there is so much that we would learn from listening to the trans experience and realising, 'Oh, this doesn't seem that far away. I can understand this'. If we build a closeness to each other, a proximity, then we could see where our struggles are intersected. The news at the moment is pitting cisgender women against trans people in this fight for safe spaces. It's a very purposeful tactic to distance oppressed and marginalised people from one another. When we actually look at what's happening with trans rights, it's very similar to the core principles of feminism - the right to wear what you want and not be hurt and fought against for it. The right for consent over your body, the right to say who you are and not to have that affect your workplace environment or how your level of intellect is perceived. All of these issues were fought for as feminist rights for women in recent history and are still being fought for today. I think what the media is currently trying to do is separate us instead of getting people to look at the commonalities.

What's the arts' role in helping with this, when many of the people perhaps most likely to judge may never go to a performance space?

What's been interesting in doing this show is that, unfortunately, even in liberal groups a lot of people actually hold lots of really dangerous misconceptions about trans people. Labour MPs are still voting against trans rights. I think liberal-minded people may still have the idea that everyone can be who they want to be, but when it comes to laws and regulations, I think there's still a lot of caution as far as trans rights are concerned.

Burgerz was originally shown in a queer venue in East London, and although the show went down really well, I had this itch to take it elsewhere - to the wider community. I took the show to the Edinburgh Fringe, and what was beautiful about that was that I came out on stage one day and 80% of the audience had grey hair and were above the age of 60. That was a real buzz for me because the show had an effect on those people which was similar to the effect it had had on my queer audience a few months earlier. I think what's exciting now is that we're going to different venues in different cities and are now reaching more people. Hopefully they're telling their friends that they should go along to see Burgerz for themselves. I hope this will then inspire them to have conversations with their family or with people back home. That's how things work. It's like a chain of effects

Have you ever considered taking Burgerz, or a version of it, into schools?

We've talked about that a lot, but I'd obviously have to edit out a lot of things that wouldn't be appropriate.

Maybe it s something for the future, but I do think we need to have stuff about gender and trans covered in schools. I think you have to get people thinking differently from a very young age

Did you always want to perform?

Yeah, I was always a queen and always dancing around the house. But I grew up in a house where arts weren't the thing. We didn't go to the theatre because we couldn t afford to. I didn't know any artists either, so there was no role model, but I knew I wanted to perform and I loved drama at school.

I thought the only way to do that was to be like a Hollywood actor. I didn't realise there were different careers in the arts For me, it wasn't accessible, and being the realistic kid that I was, I felt I needed to get a job and make money. It was only when I moved to London for university that I discovered the queer arts live scene, and it was all downhill from there ..

I remember ringing my mum and saying, 'I'm going to be performing in a club tonight', and she was like, 'Oh no, I hope you stay at university!' I was like, 'Of course I'm going to stay at uni'. A year later, I told her that I'd dropped out to become a star!

How old were you when you realised that you were non-binary?

I didn't just pop out and use the word. I'd always felt that I was, but the word came later. From a young age, 13 or 14, I would express my gender in non-traditional ways, and from the age of 16 or 17, I was wearing dresses and makeup. I didn't have the word non-binary because I wasn't on the internet, and I didn t know anybody who was using it. I knew I was trans, but I hadn't quite figured out what that meant. I was, like, does this mean I'm a woman? Does this mean I'm going to be transitioning into a woman? I was confused. Then, when I was 19, I met an artist who asked if we could use the pronouns 'them' and 'they'. I was, like, 'What?', but at the same time I realised that this was something that could be a bit more chilled for me. I don't really like seeing myself with a label; that's not what's important to me. What *is* important is that gender is complicated, and this is the thing that makes me feel less stressed out.

I'm not excited by the non-binary label, but it simplifies things for me. It sounds like a shorthand way of describing what's going on in my head.

How do you deal with the day-to-day challenges you face?

It depends what place you're in. You might go to a different part of town and your experience will change. I live with three other trans people and, sadly, we're just really used to it. Living in that environment really helps, though, as it means you can have frank conversations. When I go out with the other girls I live with, if someone's pointing at us or taking a photo of us, we'll look at each other and, in that moment, decide whether or not we want to make a thing out of it or not. Moments like that really remind you that it can take over your whole day, but there are mechanisms to ensure that it doesn't. I think wearing headphones really helps, and I've worked on my self-defence classes as well. I don't feel disempowered by it anymore. I think reminding myself that this is a problem that they have with themselves and not me really helps as well. Of course, there are situations where things escalate and are more dangerous, and then those mantras aren't going to save you. But at the moment, with day-to-day stuff on the street, I just take a deep breath and carry on listening to my music.

Finally, what piece of advice would you give to your 15-year-old self?

I would say, don't waste any more time on trying to fit into other people s expectations of you, because you will achieve so much more when you're just yourself.

Travis Alabanza's Burgerz shows at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Friday 15 & Saturday 16 November, and as part of SHOUT Festival at Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, on Sunday 17 November.

LESLEY JOSEPH MATT SLACK
JOE McELDERRY FAYE BROOKES

Snow White AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

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What's On

Little Mix

After recently celebrating eight years as a band, Little Mix are back on the road again and heading to the Midlands this month.
With five top-five albums, four number-one singles and two Brit Awards under their collective belt, the girls here bring their latest album, LM5, to the stage

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, Thursday 7 - Saturday 9 November and Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham, Monday 11 - Tuesday 12 November

Yep, love it or loathe it, it is indeed that time of year again - and 2019's most-anticipated festive film is surely Last Christmas, a yuletide-season romance starring Game Of Thrones' Emilia Clarke and Crazy Rich Asians' Henry Golding
The movie is loosely based on the Wham! song of the same name, with the soundtrack featuring several of their best-loved tracks. George Michael solo songs are also included, one of which is a previously unheard number

On general release on Friday 15th November

Portraits is a mini-series that brings together two shows about (take a deep breath, this is quite a list!) identity, power, race, gender, sexuality, society, politics, fitting in, rebelling, living life and 'just being'. The shows are

Queens Of Sheba
Loosely based on the DSRKT nightspot incident of 2015, the multi award winning Queens Of Sheba tells the funny, moving and uplifting stories of four passionate black women battling everyday misogynoir - where sexism meets racism.

Burgerz
After someone threw a burger at them and shouted a transphobic slur, one of the UK's most prominent trans voices, Travis Alabanza, here explores how trans bodies survive, and how, by them reclaiming an act of violence, we can address our own complicity

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Wednesday 13 - Saturday 16 November

Brum Gay Orchestra Concert

Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra are back with a concert of hits from some of the world's greatest musicals.
Led by conductor Jack Lovell, the orchestra will be performing numbers from, among other shows, Mamma Mia!, The Sound Of Music, Priscilla Queen Of The Desert, Hamilton and The Greatest Showman.

St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, Saturday 30 November

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WANTS A FELLA
The Adult Panto!
ADULTS ONLY!
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10 - 14 December
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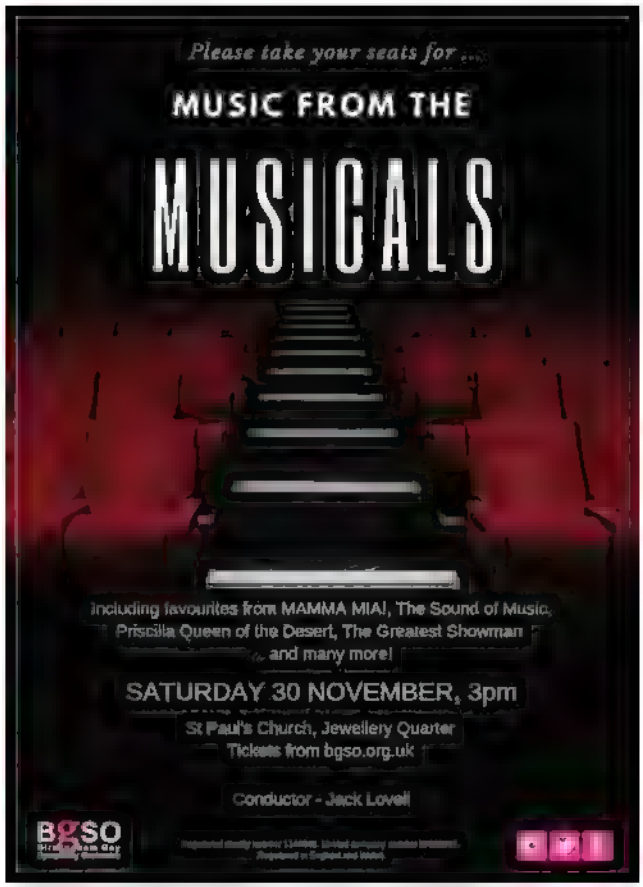
Please take your seats for ...
MUSIC FROM THE
MUSICALS
Including favourites from MAMMA MIA!, The Sound of Music, Priscilla Queen of the Desert, The Greatest Showman ... and many more!
SATURDAY 30 NOVEMBER, 3pm
St Paul's Church, Jewellery Quarter
Tickets from bgso.org.uk
Conductor - Jack Lovell
BGSO

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FRIDAY 20TH DECEMBER 2019
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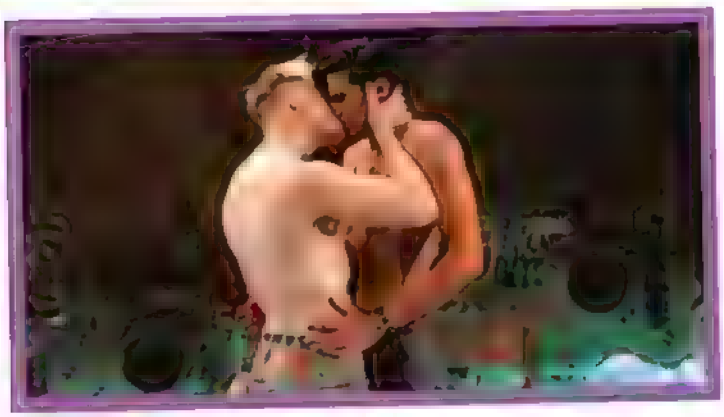
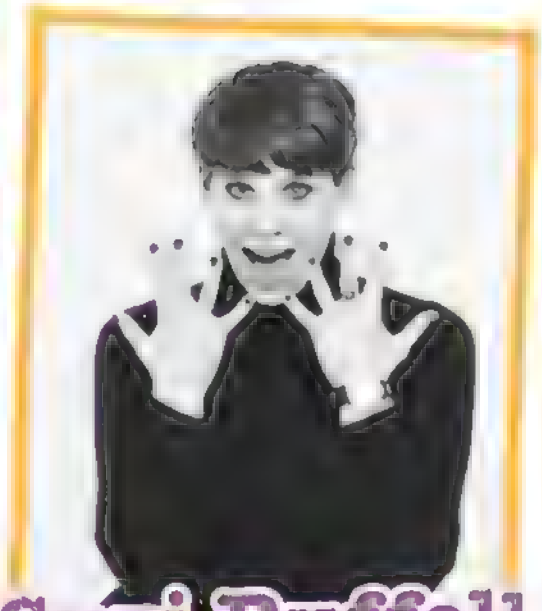
What's On



My Beautiful Laundrette

Hanif Kureishi's original movie version of My Beautiful Laundrette, released in 1985, focused on an interracial love story between a young Pakistani man and his old school friend, a white working class guy who'd lost his way.
A clever, funny and powerful reflection of life in Thatcher's Britain, the film has now been adapted for the stage, with Leicester Curve Artistic Director Nikolai Foster the man at the helm.

Birmingham Repertory Theatre , Tuesday 5 - Saturday 9 November



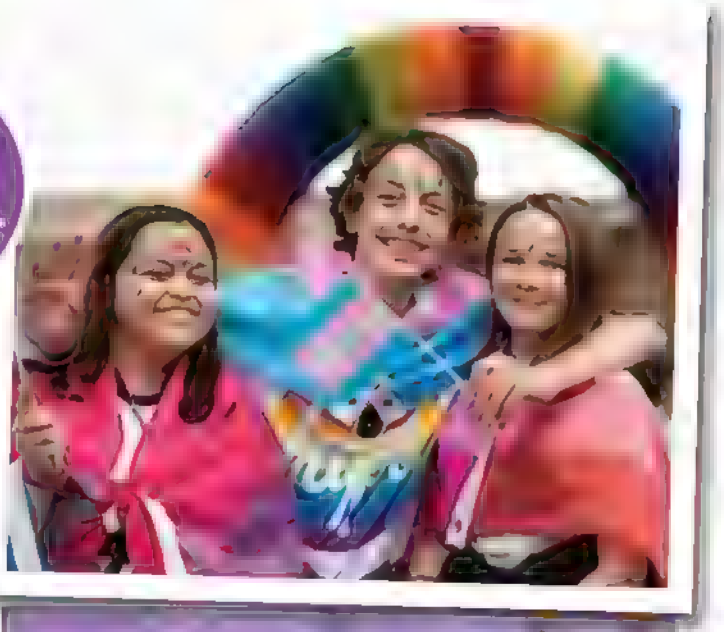
Suzi Ruffell

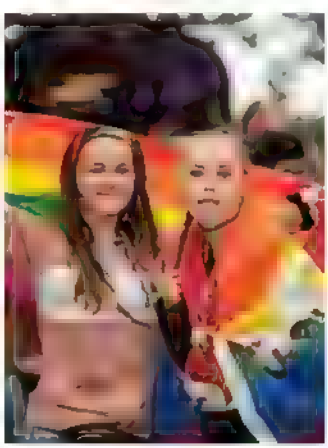
Lauded as a real stand up gem by the Guardian, Suzi Ruffell is back with her brand new tour, Dance Like Everyone's Watching.
Suzi has made a name for herself by turning tragedy and anxiety into big laughs. This year she's actually happy, a state of being that's encouraged her to explore the question: are all stand-ups at their best when they're miserable?

Glee Club, Nottingham, Tues 19 November; Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 20 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 6 December

WOLVES PRIDE PHOTO SPECIAL

Wolves Pride was back with a bang last month, with crowds of people heading to the city centre for a day of fantastic performances, music from DJs, tasty street food and drinks aplenty!





Photos from City of Wolverhampton Council

WIN! with Midlands Zone...

Two tickets to see Jane McDonald!

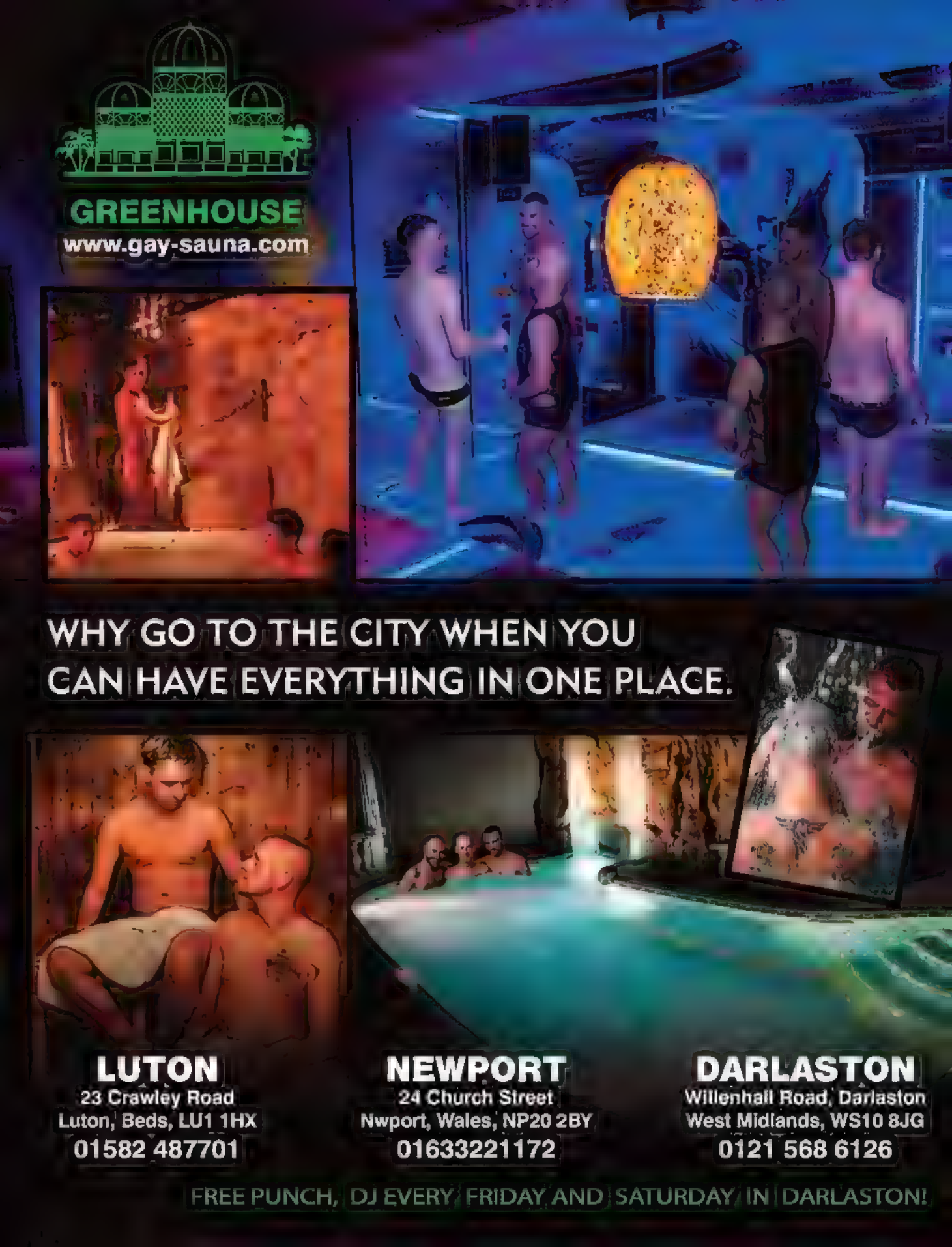
We're giving one lucky reader a pair of tickets to see Jane McDonald at her Live At Christmas show on Friday 20 December at Arena Birmingham!

This magical not to be-missed concert will be packed to its festive rafters with fantastic seasonal music, including I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day, Fairytale Of New York and songs from Jane's very own repertoire.

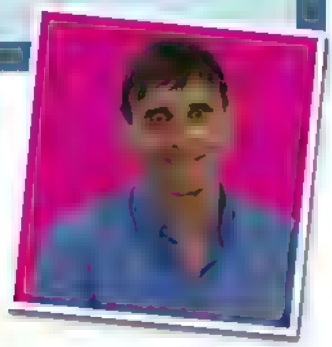
Jane will be performing with her live band and backing singers - so if you fancy a festive night to remember, enter our competition and cross your fingers...

Enter the competition via our Facebook page at @midlandszone

MGM
BIRMINGHAM MATURE GAY MEN
MGM - Midlands.org.uk
mgmbham@gmail.com
Call Tom for details - 07899 335677
The Fox, Lower Essex Street, Birmingham, B5 6SN


GREENHOUSE
www.gay-sauna.com
WHY GO TO THE CITY WHEN YOU
CAN HAVE EVERYTHING IN ONE PLACE.
LUTON
23 Crawley Road
Luton, Beds, LU1 1HX
01582 487701
NEWPORT
24 Church Street
Nwport, Wales, NP20 2BY
01633221172
DARLASTON
Willenhall Road, Darlaston
West Midlands, WS10 8JG
0121 568 6126
FREE PUNCH, DJ EVERY FRIDAY AND SATURDAY IN DARLASTON!

ON THE BALL
with
Steve Ball



Love ALWAYS Wins

The best way to respond to hate is with love, says Steve...

Hate crimes are on the rise and have now reached a record high, having increased by 10% in the last year across England and Wales. The largest increase was in transgender hate crimes, which rocketed by 37% to 2,333 incidents. And hate crimes against LGBT people were up a quarter, to 14,500. The Home Office says that the increase could be driven by better recording by police and the greater confidence of victims to report, but 'genuine increases cannot be ruled out'. Either way, this is worrying news and confirms that many of us still face hatred simply because of who we are.

But how should we respond, not just to these violent hate crimes but to protests by religiously motivated groups demonstrating outside our schools and theatres?

I think that two guys in Chester may have the answer. A few weeks ago, protesters gathered outside the city's Storyhouse theatre, where gender-bending musical The Rocky Horror Show was playing. They held banners with heartening messages such as 'Flee from the wrath to come' and 'Be sure your sin will find you out'.

What no one expected was the guys' response to the protest. They started kissing, to cheers and applause from people outside the theatre. They later explained on Facebook their decision to kiss, writing: "Lots of people were arguing with them, but we honestly believe the best way to respond is with love "

Love may not be the first emotion we encounter when we're called a faggot in the street, told by a group of Bible-bashing Christians we're going to 'go to hell', or see protesters with loudhailers outside schools demonstrating against the inclusion of LGBT-inclusive storybooks in our classrooms. But even in these divided times, it's love, not hate, that will bring us all together.

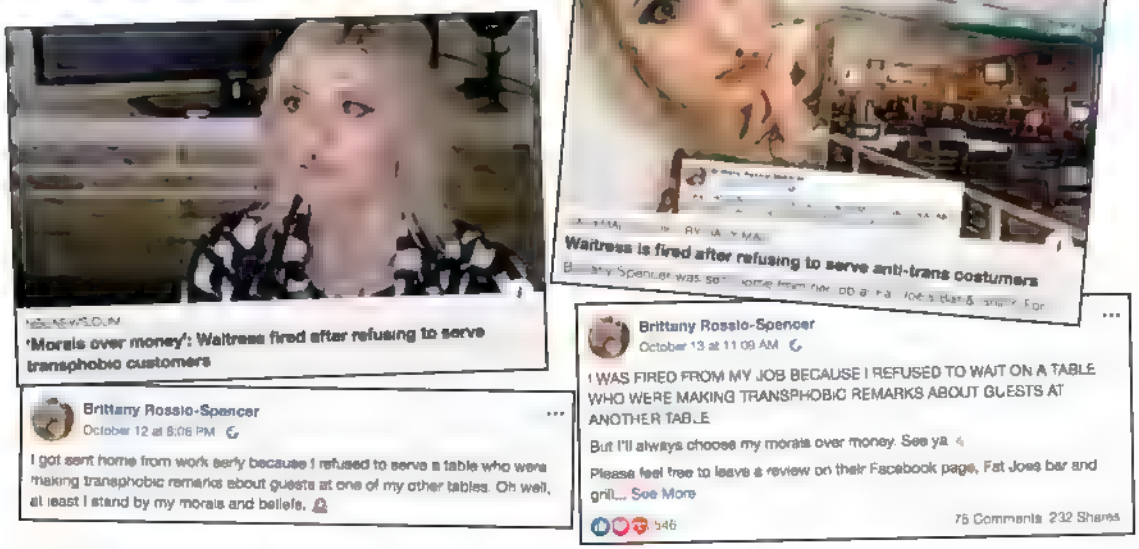
EVEN IN THESE DIVIDED TIMES, IT'S LOVE, NOT HATE, THAT WILL BRING US ALL TOGETHER

Let s not forget the wonderful example set two years ago when the people of Manchester stood together against a hate-fuelled terrorist attack at an Ariana Grande concert where 23 people were killed. It was incredible to see the outpouring of love by thousands of people in response to one person's act of hate. As the city reminded us, 'love always wins'.

NHS
MENS HEALTH
LEICESTER
Male only clinic sessions available
Find out more at
www.leicestersexualhealth.nhs.uk
Free, private and confidential sexual health checks for gay & bisexual men, men who have sex with men and swingers*.
*
Day: Mondays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm)
Place: 29 New Bond Street, LE1 4RQ
Splash Spa & Leisure
Day: Tuesdays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm)
Place: 61 Bedford Street, LE1 3JR
Amigos Leisure
Day: Thursdays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm)
Place: 30 Bedford Street South, LE1 3JR
TRADE
Day: Fridays
Time: 12 - 2pm (last appointment 1.45pm)
Place: 2nd Floor, 27 Bowling Green Street, LE1 6AS
You can also check out Trade Sexual Health
www.tradesexualhealth.com

NASTY PIG
EXCLUSIVELY AT CLONEZONE
BIRMINGHAM
84 HURST STREET, B5 4TD
MANCHESTER | LONDON SOHO LONDON EARLS COURT
CLONEZONE.CO.UK | 0121 6666640

LGBTQ morals


'Morals over money': Waitress fired after refusing to serve transphobic customers
Brittany Rossio-Spencer
October 12 at 8:06 PM
I got sent home from work early because I refused to serve a table who were making transphobic remarks about guests at one of my other tables. Oh well, at least I stand by my morals and beliefs.
Brittany Rossio-Spencer
I'm seriously crying. I can't believe how much coverage this is getting and all the support. You guys are truly amazing.
Waitress is fired after refusing to serve anti-trans costumers
Brittany Rossio-Spencer
October 13 at 11:09 AM
I WAS FIRED FROM MY JOB BECAUSE I REFUSED TO WAIT ON A TABLE WHO WERE MAKING TRANSPHOBIC REMARKS ABOUT GUESTS AT ANOTHER TABLE
But I'll always choose my morals over money. See ya
Please feel free to leave a review on their Facebook page, Fat Joes bar and grill... See More
75 Comments 232 Shares

"IN A WORLD OF LIES, ARROGANCE AND BAD BAD HAIR, I HAVE FOUND SOMETHING OF A HERO"

I hate reading the news at the moment. I can't bear hearing about Brexit. I can never face looking at Donald Trump's face. And Boris just baffles me. Endlessly

From being someone who was always interested in politics, the last few years of chaos and crazy election results have turned me into one of those people who has to comfort themselves constantly with videos of sweet kittens and playful puppies. I watch one item on the news and I turn to Facebook for something cutesy to take away the pain. If things continue the way they are, I will no doubt soon be seeking comfort by wrapping myself from head to toe in pink fur fabric and insisting that everyone I know wears kitten ears or a rainbow unicorn horn.

Before I disappear entirely into a fluffy cloud of glittery mush, however, I'm trying to look at the positives. This has involved torturing myself with the news in the hope that I will find a smidgen of the 'good' variety, just a smidgen. And not a story about a kitten adopting a homeless puppy either, or anything of that ilk. Something about people.

Remarkably, I'm having some success. In fact, in a world of lies, arrogance and bad, bad hair, I've found something of a hero.

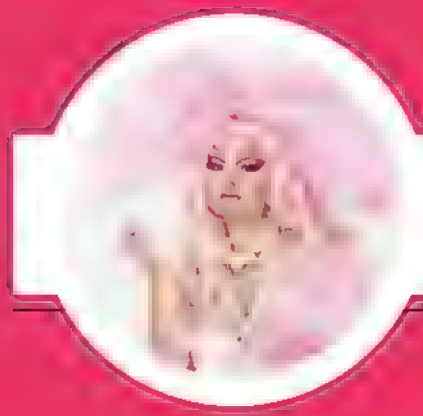
You know those people who have really bigoted views and are so bigoted that they can't conceive of anyone finding their views offensive, or perhaps even disagreeing with them? Well, this good news story is about them.
Bear with me, it does improve...

The reported story is that two such people were in a cafe in the States. Actually, as it was in the US, it was probably a diner. In my mind, they were probably ordering something very American, like a stack of pancakes, but that may just be because I'm really hungry as I'm writing this.

Whatever these people were wanting to order, they were distracted by a sudden burst of transphobia. Having seen someone who was trans in the diner, they were discussing how disgusting they found them. So sure were they that everyone else would agree with this heinous view, they shared their opinions with their waitress and, warming to their theme, questioned her about why trans people were allowed in the diner. And here comes our hero. The waitress in question, Britanny, says that she told the couple she didn't agree with their views and walked away. Without taking their order. When she asked her boss to get someone else to serve the couple, he reportedly said that she had to suck it up or leave. So she left.

Since then, there have been various to-ings and fro-ings on social media, during which period it seems that Britanny has stuck to her guns, even though she no longer has her job

In the general scheme of things, her gesture was a small one - one person refusing to go along with someone else's bigotry - but in this time of bad news, she is surely a hero. That she lost her job is terrible; that she valued her principles so much that she lost her job for them, is remarkable. I really hope she's got another one now. She deserves it. As well as a massive stack of pancakes.



LET'S TALK:

The Lacey Lou Column

Lacey Lou explains why the first series of RuPaul's Drag Race UK has left her disappointed...

Like the majority of the LGBTQ+ community, I'm completely pumped that RuPaul's Drag Race has come to the UK. The new BBC Three series offers our participating sisters a truly fantastic opportunity to showcase their talents and bring the magic of UK drag to a wider audience...

Having waited with baited breath to find out which queens would be appearing on the show, I was more than a little confused by the line-up when it was finally revealed. There were queens of not even a year's experience, queens who haven't performed. Was this the programme maker's idea of a UK version of the hit American show?! No disrespect to the queens at all - from watching so far, I've thoroughly enjoyed it - but I must confess that the UK series has left me somewhat stumped.

Why are there queens of little experience competing when there are plenty of high-calibre experienced queens who are trans and cisgender female absolutely killing it in the UK?

It was explained to me by somebody who'd enquired about the series' application process that it was open to all genders and sexualities, as is the US original. If this is true, are they really saying that queens who haven't performed, or are lacking any great amount of experience, are the most suitable performers for a spot on this ultimate drag competition?!

We all know that that simply cannot be the case. We also know that, truth be told, the programme hasn't caught up with the living, breathing drag communities around the world. RuPaul himself has been caught out in many an interview mangling his words and revealing his real thoughts. The truth is, he doesn't see us as being as credible as our cis male counterparts. The argument I hear is that it's *his* show, therefore *his* rules. This is very true, and he has the right to dictate what happens. But if this is how he chooses to dictate, then we need to remove him from his position as the public face of our community. His caveman views fail to represent drag as the accepting and loving artform that it most definitely is and has always been. He seems to have forgotten the performers who were our pioneers.

One man does not dictate what communities can or can't do, and lots and lots of queens have lifted the middle finger to RuPaul's dated rhetoric. Instead, we celebrate drag for its ability to teach people how to love and feel fine about themselves

I feel for the eliminated queens - two, at the time of writing - Scaredy Kat and Gothy Kendoll. I think they were selected for the show because their stories would make for 'good TV' rather than because they had a chance of winning - and that's not what I call a competition. Both young, both insecure, and with a lot to learn about themselves and drag, they were always likely to receive fierce criticism - and indeed they did.

I wish each and every queen who's still on the show - and those who participate in future seasons - the very best of luck. Make some good television for us and make a memorable career for yourself whilst drag is basking in the TV limelight. But let's be honest about things and call the show what it is - a very entertaining entertainment, not a credible competition.

Support local drag

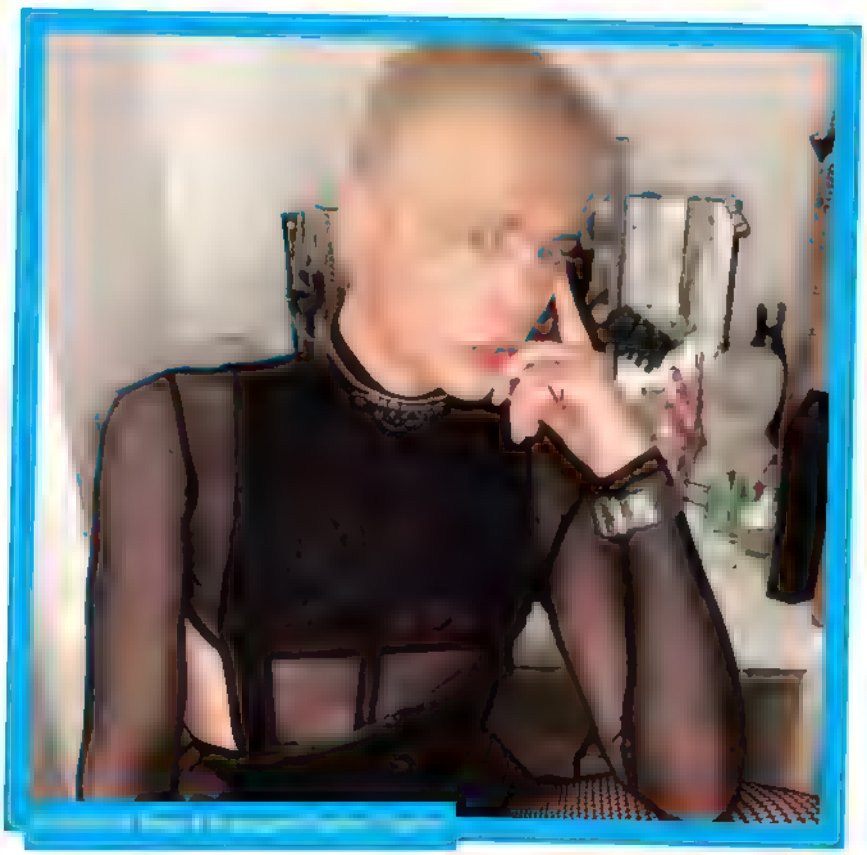
Lots of love,

Lacey X

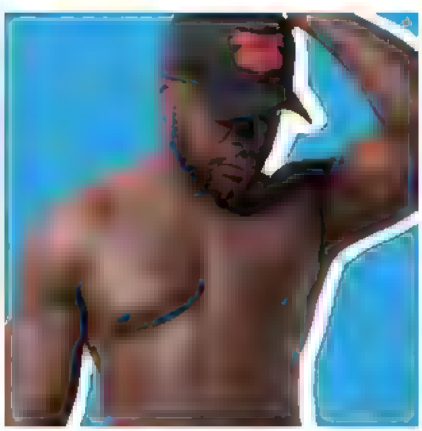
TWITTER: Carry on the chat @laceymcfadyen

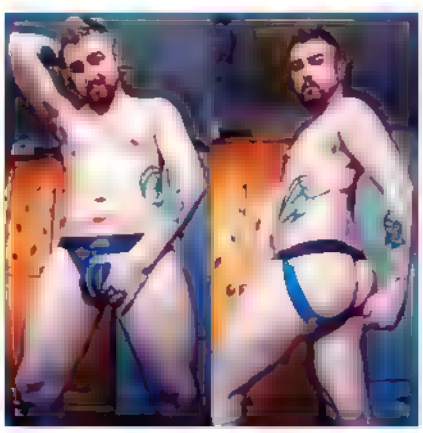
DRESSING FOR EVERY BODY

Clonezone Brand Manager Topher explains how to feel and dress 'sexy', whatever your body size...



Hello, Midlands Zone readers! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Topher and I work for Clonezone, a company that's known for its sexy gear, toys and fetish accessories. I'm endlessly frustrated by the underwear imagery with which we get provided, featuring hairless models with flat stomachs and flawless caucasian skin. I get really tired of it, so I'm always asking our gorgeous customers - and colleagues! - to send us selfies in which they're wearing gear from our stores and events.





One of our customers' main concerns when purchasing 'sexy' clothing from us (and one of the questions I'm most frequently asked) is: How is it going to look on me?

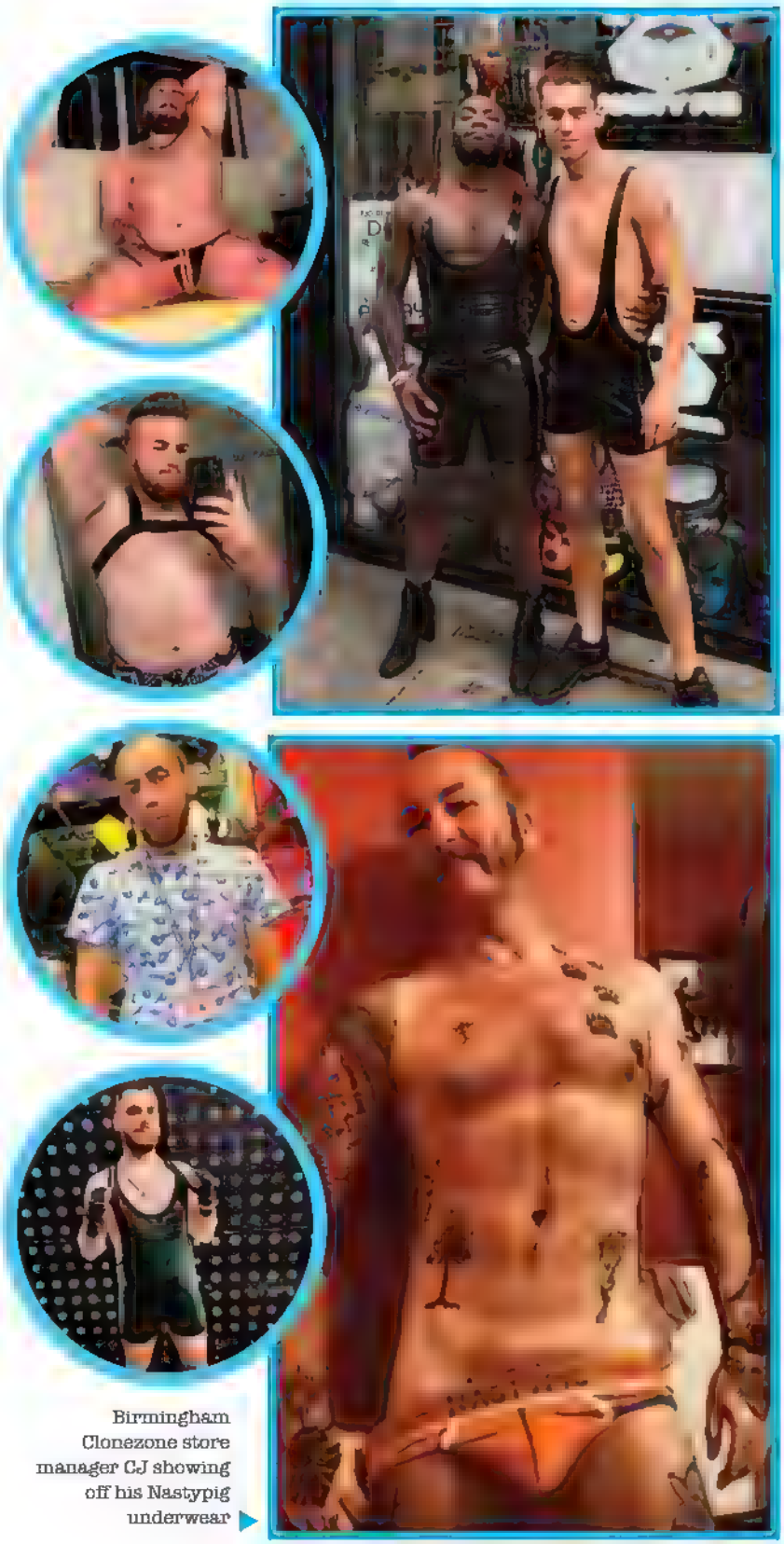
For those of us (myself included) with soft mid-sections, it can be a worry when buying products with elasticated waistbands - especially those tailored by some underwear brands. I think a lot of it comes down to the fact that we're not all that familiar with seeing a little bit of muffin top. Personally, I think it's sexy 'Gorgeous' comes in all shapes, sizes and colours, and I think it's about time we actually embraced that truth.

Yes, most of our gear is skimpy - it always has been - but that doesn't mean that your options should be limited or your self-worth negatively affected by what's represented in editorial advertising. I mean, some people look fabulous a certain way and some don't - but you don't know if you don't try. You're always welcome to come into a Clonezone store and work alongside our staff to try on gear until you find the right fit for you.

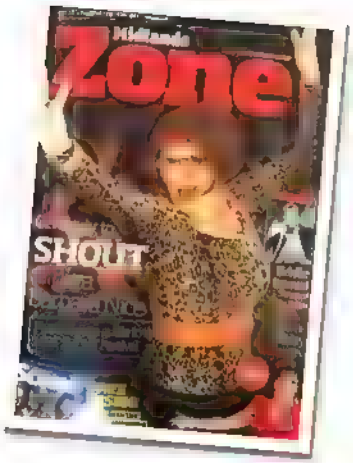
Lots of people are intimidated by the idea of wearing materials such as leather, latex, neoprene, PVC or even 'wet look' fabrics, as they feel that you need a firm, toned body to pull it off. You don't. One of the fabulous things about these sumptuous fabrics is that they help to lift, sculpt and sometimes smooth out your skin. You also don't need to be hairless, so embrace your fur if you have it. It will only take a quick scan of our social media feeds to see shining examples of all different types of people wearing our fashions and fetish items .. and not just cis men.

Anyway, what I'm saying is, please don't let insecurities about your shape stop you from exploring the gear available at Clonezone. We have a company of well-trained staff who will be only too happy to assist you in finding gear that not only helps you to look good but, more importantly, to *feel* good.

If you have any questions or want some advice, feel free to reach out to Topher at @HelloIAmTopher or topher@tophertaylor.co.uk

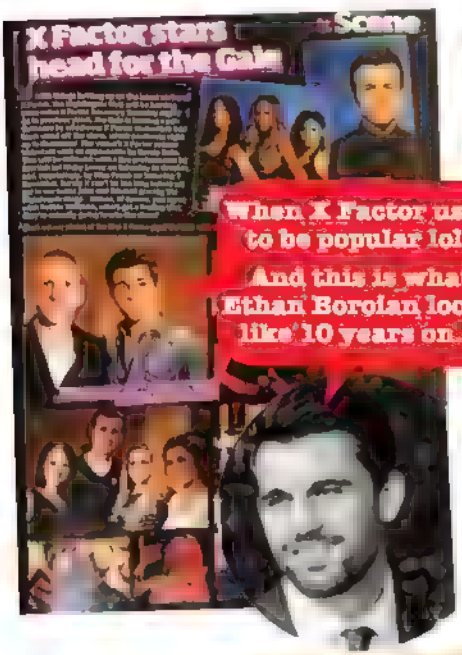


Birmingham Clonezone store manager CJ showing off his Nastypig underwear



10 YEARS AGO

A look back at Midlands Zone from November 2007



When X Factor used to be popular lol!

And this is what Ethan Borolan looks like 10 years on...

10 years ago the Daily Mail ran a homophobic story about Boyzone's Stephen Gately

No change there then!

These are some of the highlights of the very first SHOUT festival 10 years ago which included our Brummie diva Barbara Nice!

Double dose of BRENDA LABEAU
SANDRA LONDON puts it about across the Midlands
u won't e short-changed with MISS PENNY
Eden set for a Highland fling with MARY MAC
SCENE
Your guide to the month ahead on the GAY SCENE
NOVEMBER 2019
Let's PARTY!

What's On

AROUND THE MIDLANDS GAY SCENE

Dr Bev Ballcrusher

Mon 4 November, Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

BGT'S DANNY BEARD

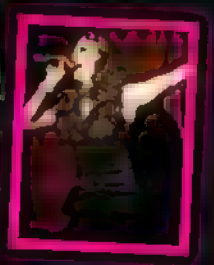
Britain's Got Talent star Danny Beard returns to Birmingham's award winning Eden Bar this month - and then returns again! Danny's certainly become one of the city's favourite drag acts in recent years, so if you still haven't caught up with him, make sure you head down to Eden this month

Topsie Redfern

West End star, cabaret artist and runner-up in Drag Idol UK 2013, Topsie Redfern will be bringing her stunning vocals to the Midlands twice this month.

Fri 8 November, Village Inn, Birmingham

Sat 30 November, Red Lion, Walsall



PARTY WITH MARTY

SHE'S GOT A BUSY MONTH!

Drag legend Marty Smith is once again out and about this month. She'll be serving up her usual laugh filled style of fun games and naughty antics in and around the Midlands

Friday 1 November, The Yard, Coventry
Saturday 9 November, Bar Diva, Dudley
Monday 11 November - Miss Penny's Birthday Bash at Havana Republic, Shrewsbury
Wednesday 19 November - Miss Marty will be hosting S.E.X - An Evening Of Comedy And Conversation at Eden Bar, Birmingham
and you can also catch up with her at Thirsty Thursdays, **EVERY THURSDAY at The Village Inn, Birmingham**

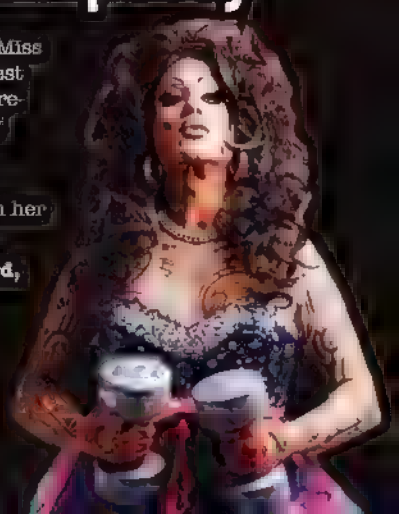
Miss Thunderpussy

International drag superstar Miss Thunderpussy lands in the West Midlands this month, so get prepared for cheeky banter, dirty talkin' and blinding tunes!

And as *once* could never be enough, you can catch up with her *twice* this month...

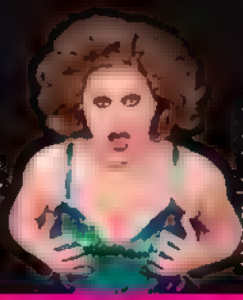
Friday 8 November, The Yard, Coventry

Saturday 23 November, Bar Diva, Dudley



Kara Van Park

Fri 1 November, The Village Inn, Birmingham



Fanny Burns

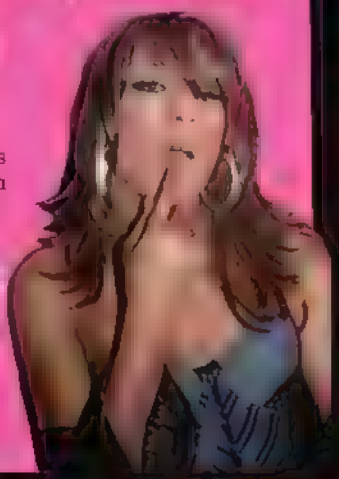
Sat 23 November Eden Bar, Birmingham

La Voix

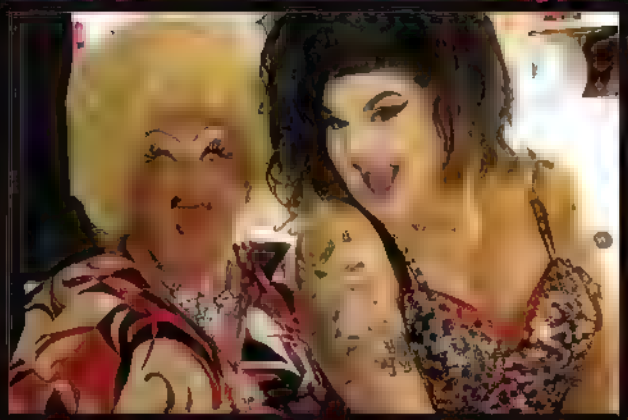
Thurs 31 October Eden Bar, Birmingham

The Whore of Hampstead Heath SANDRA

The Whore of Hampstead Heath returns to the Midlands this month to get you in the party spirit!



Camp as T*TS! with Lady Diamond & Amy!



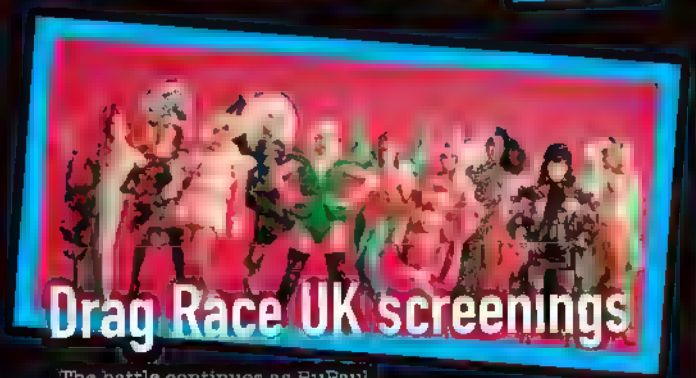
The Queen of Sitges is coming to Birmingham for a camp-as-tits cabaret performance with local favourite Amy LaQueefa. don't miss it!

Sunday 17 November, Missing Bar, Birmingham

Glitoris Girls

Outrageous all-singing all-dancing drag duo Glitoris Girls have been sent to Coventry!

Fri 29 November, The Yard, Coventry



Drag Race UK screenings

The battle continues as RuPaul tries to find the UK's first-ever Drag Race star! You can watch the show live on the big screen every Thursday at three gay venues in the Midlands - with the Grand Final taking place on Thursday 21 November.

Live screenings on Thursday 31 Oct, 7 & 14 Nov and the Grand Final on 21 November at Eden Bar, Birmingham, The Loft, Birmingham, and The Yard, Coventry.

Miss Penny

The multi-award-winning Miss Penny will this month be live on stage at two Midlands venues, entertaining the masses with her super-fantastic act. If you haven't yet seen her, be sure to pop along - she's fab!

Friday 15 November, Village Inn, Birmingham

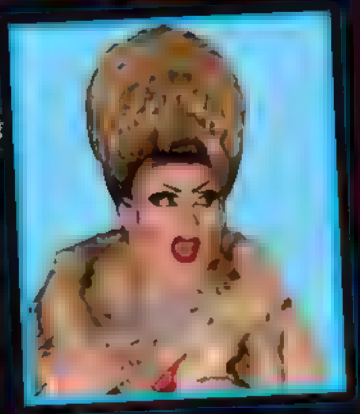
and you can catch Miss Penny EVERY Monday at Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

What's On

Tina Sparkle

Sat 16 November, Bar Diva, Dudley

Brenda LaBeau



Drag Idol UK 2016 finalist Brenda LaBeau is known for her incredible live vocals. The scouse songstress will surely bring the house down when she takes to the stage at Eden Bar and Havana Republic this month.

Monday 18 November, Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

Thursday 21 November, Eden Bar, Birmingham

Martha D'Arthur

Since winning Drag Idol UK in 2013, Martha has become a popular fixture on the UK drag circuit, with four residencies in London. She will be paying Brum a visit this month.

Friday 22 November, Village Inn, Birmingham

Mary Golds

Straight from the Valleys, Welsh drag star Mary Golds is bringing her comedic wit and charm to Coventry this month.

Fri 22 November, The Yard, Coventry

Miss Amber

From the bright lights of Blackpool, Miss Amber is set to bring a whole lot of showbiz to Dudley this month.

Sat 30 November, Bar Diva, Dudley

OTHER EVENTS INCLUDE:

Monday 1 November

The Human League Tribute performing the entire DARE album Eden Bar, Birmingham

Saturday 3 November

Karaoke with Mitzy Mansell The Red Lion, Walsall

Dawn Of The Dead Halloween Party The Yard, Coventry

Friends Of Dorothy Bar Diva, Dudley

Sunday 3 November

Birmingham Trans Clothing Swap Artefact, Pershore Road - 1pm, Free

Dark Horse Voices Loft, Birmingham, 2 - 8pm

Tuesday 5 November

SHOUT Festival Opening Party Nightingale Club, Birmingham

Thursday 7 November

Deep In Vogue Nightingale Club, Birmingham

Friday 8 November

The Artpop Night Nightingale Club, B'ham

Saturday 10 November

Queer Life Drawing Loft, Birmingham, 2 - 5pm

Dragpunk's All Ages Drag Showcase 2019 Eden Bar, Birmingham, 4 - 7pm

Wednesday 13 Nov

Linda Gold's Euro Drag Contest Missing Bar, Birmingham

Men Only Night The Crown Inn, Derby

Friday 15 November

The Fundraiser Rave Nightingale Club, B'ham

Mids Bears Eden Bar, Birmingham

Saturday 16 November

Birmingham Fetish Men Eden Bar, Birmingham

Sunday 17 November

Paul Aleksandr's Fun Drag Storytime Warehouse Cafe, Digbeth - 2pm, Free

Movieden Eden Bar, Birmingham

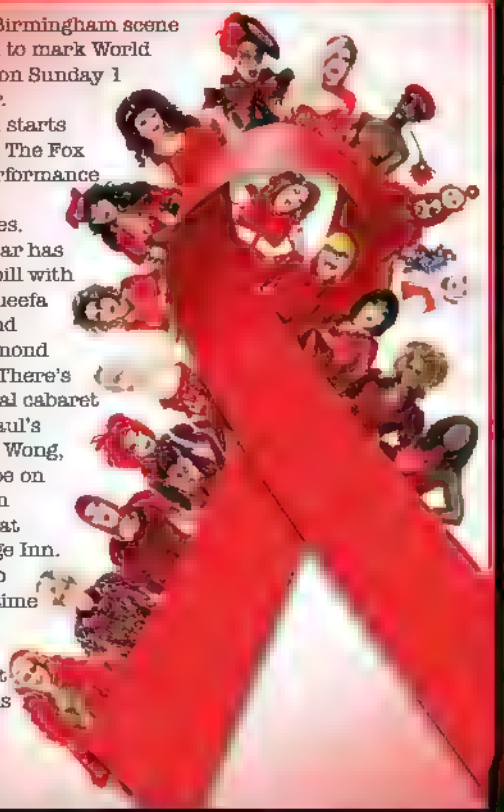
Leather Social Eden Bar, Birmingham

Poppycock

Saturday 9 November, Eden Bar, Birmingham

WORLD AIDS DAY
Pub Crawl – Sun 1 Dec

Join the Birmingham scene pub crawl to mark World Aids Day on Sunday 1 December.
The crawl starts at 6pm at The Fox with a performance by The Milkshakes. Missing Bar has a double bill with Amy LaQueefa at 9pm and Lady Diamond at 10pm. There's also special cabaret with RuPaul's Sum Ting Wong, who will be on stage from midnight at The Village Inn. It will also be party time at Eden Bar, and later on at Glamorous too.



Tuesday 19 November
Trans Panel Evening Beorma Bar, University of Birmingham, 5 - 8pm

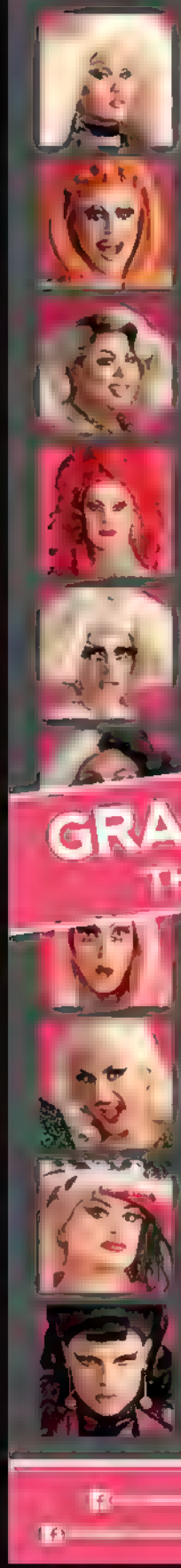
Friday 22 November
Sequin Show Stoppers Eden Bar, Birmingham

Saturday 23 November
Karaoke with Mitzy Mansell The Red Lion, Walsall
Disney Night Gossip, Stoke
Club Scritches Eden Bar, Birmingham

Sunday 24 November
Paul and Tanja's Loaded Drag Warehouse Cafe, Digbeth - 2 - 5pm, Free
Gameden Eden Bar, Birmingham

Friday 29 November
Glitoris Girls The Yard, Coventry

Saturday 30 November
15 Years Of Chic Chic, Birmingham



RuPaul's DRAG RACE UK

VIEWING PARTY!

The Loft

EVERY THURSDAY IN NOVEMBER

PLUS THE

GRAND FINALE
THURS 21ST NOV

ARRIVE AT 7PM

PLUS

FREE ENTRY TO

THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB

WITH ANY DRINK BOUGHT AT THE LOFT

GAY BARS & CLUBS IN THE MIDLANDS...

Birmingham

EDEN BAR
Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 1953
theedenbar.co.uk
/eden.bar

EVERY WEDNESDAY 8PM
Quizzical with DJ Yegi

EVERY FRIDAY & SUNDAY
Karaoke & Disco with DJ Nikki

EVERY SATURDAY
DJ Tom Lee & DJ Pani alternate weeks.

GLAMOROUS BIRMINGHAM
27-35 Hurst St, B5 4BD
Tel: 0121 622 5912
glamorousbirmingham.co.uk
/GlamorousBirmingham

EVERY MONDAY
DJ Mike Emery

EVERY WEDNESDAY
Midweek Wednesdays DJ Mike Emery

EVERY THURSDAY
Thirsty Thursdays with Pam Catz

The Loft, Birmingham

EVERY FRIDAY
Fabulous Fridays open until 6am

EVERY SATURDAY
Sparkle Pop Saturdays with Pam Catz

THE LOFT
12 Bromsgrove St, B5 6RG
Tel: 0121 6222 444
theloftlounge.co.uk
/The-Loft-Lounge

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH
Queeny's Quiz

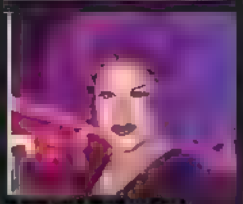
EVERY MONDAY
Monday Cocktail Club 2 for £10

EVERY WEDNESDAY
Wing It Wednesday - Kilo of wings and drink £10

MISSING BAR
Hurst St, B5 6NU
Tel: 0121 622 4256
missingbar.co.uk
/missingbar

EVERY MONDAY UNTIL 4AM
Ministry of Pound with DJ Mike Emery

EVERY TUESDAY
Karaoke with Gavina Vagina

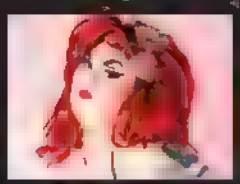


EVERY THURSDAY 9PM
Thursdays with DJ Gavina - £1.50 bombs

EVERY FRIDAY 9PM
Hit Man and Her with DJ Mike Emery & Gavina Vagina

EVERY SATURDAY
Missing's House Party with DJ Malty, DJ Mike Emery and host Twiggy

EVERY SUNDAY 8.30pm & 10.30pm
Camp as f**k with Amy LaQueela and guest cabaret

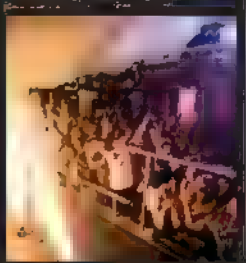


NIGHTINGALE CLUB
Kent St, B5 6RD
Tel: 0121 622 1718
nightingaleclub.co.uk
/thenightingaleclub

EVERY THURSDAY
Pounded! with £1 drinks all night

EVERY FRIDAY
Absolute Anthems with DJs Corey Hadley and Scott Hilton

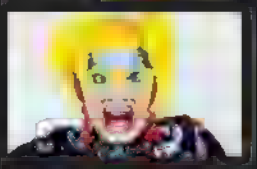
EVERY SATURDAY
Nightingale Saturdays with free entry until 12pm



THE VILLAGE INN
Hurst St, B5 4BD
Tel: 0121 622 4742
villagebirmingham.co.uk
/villageinnbirmingham

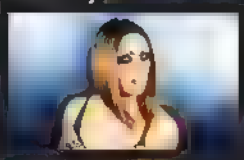
EVERY MONDAY 9PM
Bingo with Queeny

EVERY TUESDAY
Pick n Mix with Ginny Lemon + Blanche



EVERY WEDNESDAY
Karaoke with Pork Pie

EVERY THURSDAY
Thirsty Thursdays with Miss Marty



EVERY SUNDAY
Yskee Black + special guests

PLUS THESE VENUES

BOLTZ CLUB
Lower Essex St, B5 6QP
Tel: 0121 [illegible]

CLUB CHIC
[illegible]
Tel: [illegible]

THE CORE
Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 2797

DEVILS KITCHEN
Kent St, B5 6NB

FOUNTAIN INN
Wrentham St, B5 6QL
Tel: 0121 622 1452

THE FOX
17 Lower Essex St, B5 6SN Tel: 0121 622 3213

SAUNAS IN THE AREA

SPARTAN HEALTH CLUB
127 George Road, B23 7SH
Tel: 0121 382 3345

UNIT 2
78 Lower Essex St, B5 6SN
Tel: [illegible]

Birmingham venues where you can pick up Midlands Zone

COVENTRY

GLAMOROUS COVENTRY
88 Short St, CV1 2LX
glamorouscoventry.co.uk
/GlamorousCoventry

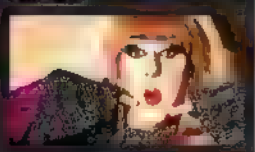
EVERY MONDAY
Happy Hour all night

EVERY TUESDAY
Karaoke and prize games with Linda Matthews

EVERY WEDNESDAY
Aftr Drk with the biggest House and R'n'B hits

EVERY THURSDAY
KaPowed Thursdays with £1 drinks all night

EVERY FRIDAY
Thank Pam it's Friday! with Pam Catz



EVERY SATURDAY
Haus of Cube cabaret with Jelly Cube

THE YARD
11-12 Bull Yard, CV1 1LH
Tel: 02475 012 959
theyardcoventry.co.uk
/TheYardCoventry

EVERY TUESDAY
Jelly Cube quiz night

EVERY WEDNESDAY
Open mic night hosted by Tom Barnwell

EVERY THURSDAY 8PM
Free Shot Karaoke with Jupiter & Minerva

EVERY SATURDAY
DJ Simon Baker with Jupiter and Minerva

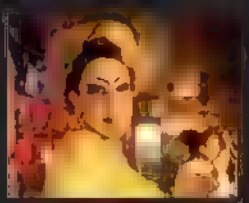
EVERY SUNDAY
Bingo, Play Your Cards Right and Deal or No Deal with weekly cash prizes of over £100

DUDLEY

BAR DIVA
76 Lower Plaza Mall, King Street, DY2 8NZ
/BarDivaThePlaceToBe

EVERY MONDAY
Manic Monday with Miss Annie

EVERY THURSDAY
Get Pounded Karaoke with Miss Annie



EVERY FRIDAY
Freaky Friday's with DJ Mikey

EVERY SATURDAY
Cabaret Saturdays with Miss Annie

EVERY SUNDAY
Ring & Ride with Me & Margaret

SHREWSBURY

HAVANA REPUBLIC
18-21 Abbey Foregate, SY2 6AE
Tel: 01743 271821
havanarepublic.co.uk
/HavanaRepublic

EVERY MONDAY
Fabulous Mondays with Miss Penny and guest cabaret every 1st and 3rd Monday

THE PEACH TREE
18-21 Abbey Foregate
Tel: 01743 355055
thepeachtree.co.uk
/ThePeachTreeRestaurant

STOKE-ON-TRENT

GOSSIP
5 Hope Street, ST1 6BT
Tel: 07399 664955

PINK
93 Stafford Street, ST1 1LS
Tel: 01782 272772

STOURBRIDGE

SAUNAS IN THE AREA

HEROES HEALTH CLUB
5 Lower High St, DY8 1TE
Tel: 0138 444 2030

TELFORD

THREE FURNACES
30 Bridgnorth Rd, Madeley
TF7 4JB, 01952 58852

WALSALL

THE LION
Birchills St, WS2 8NG
Tel: 01922 610977

THE RED LION
Park St, WS1 1NW
Tel: 01922 637790

SAUNAS IN THE AREA

GREENHOUSE
Willenhall Road, WS10 8JG
Tel: 0121 568 6126

WOLVERHAMPTON

GORGEOUS
School St, WV1 4LF
Tel: 01902 427247
/gorgeousbar

EVERY THURSDAY 1AM-6AM
#FreeEntryThursdays

EVERY FRIDAY 12AM-6AM
Fab Fridays

EVERY SATURDAY 12AM-6AM
The Breakfast Club

WORCESTER

THE FLAG
50 Lowesmoor, WR1 2SG
Tel: 01905 780220

DERBY

THE CROWN INN
40 Curzon St, DE1 1LJ
Tel: 01332 381742

LEICESTER

DOVER CASTLE
34 Dover St, LE1 6PT
Tel: 0116 255 3052

HELSINKI
94 Rutland St, LE1 1SB
Tel: 0116 254 7568

RAINBOW & DOVE
185 Charles St, LE1 1LA
Tel: 0116 254 7568

SAUNAS IN THE AREA

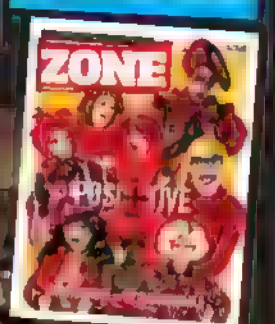
AMIGOS LEISURE
30 Bedford St South, LE1 3JR
Tel: 0116 251 1955

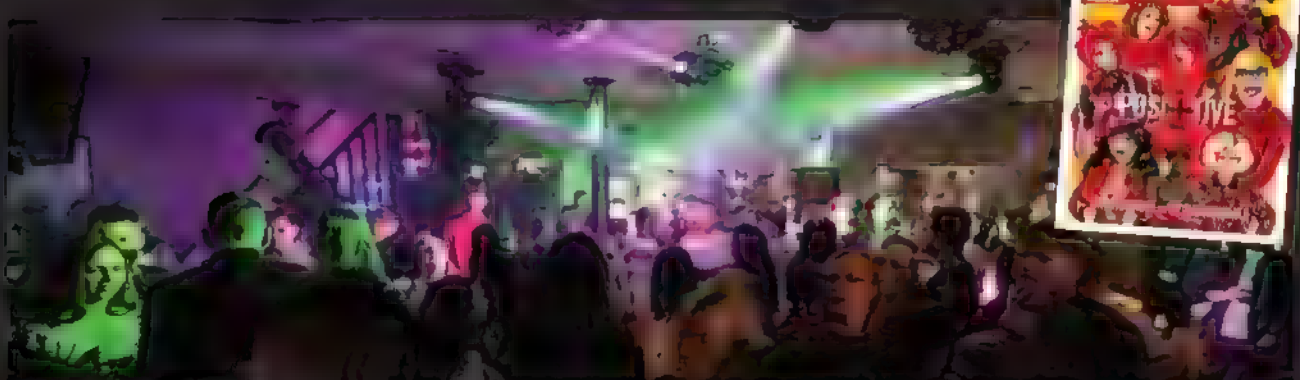
CLUB 29
29 New Bond St, LE1 4RQ
Tel: 0116 262 7770

SPLASH SPA & LEISURE
61 Bedford St South, LE1 3JR

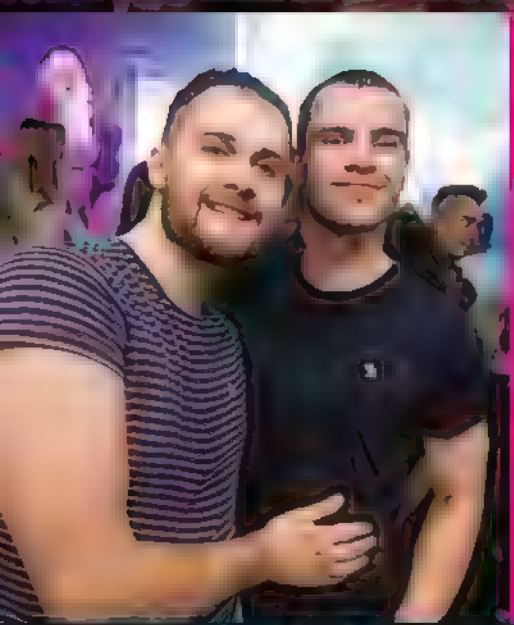
NORTHAMPTON

THE BOSTON
College St, NN1 2QP
Tel: 01604 604404
/thebostonnorthampton





The Village Inn, Birmingham



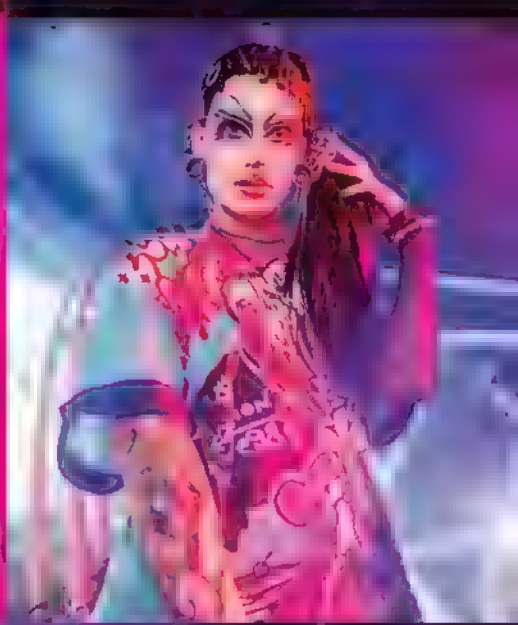
THE NIGHTINGALE

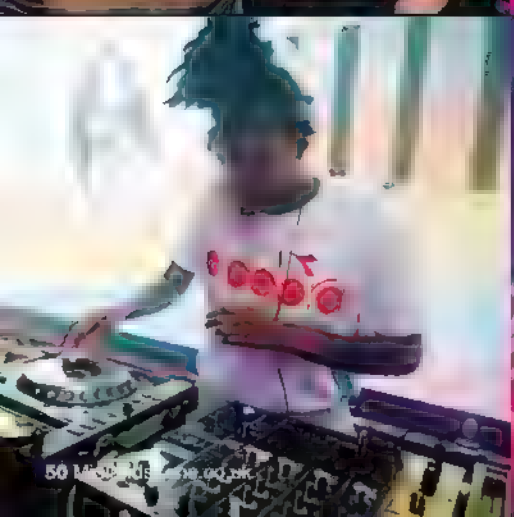
BIRMINGHAM

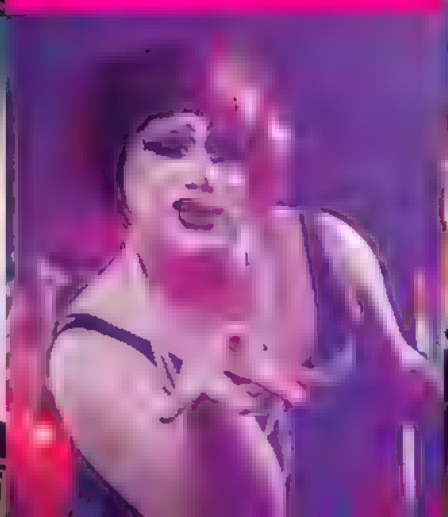
Last month saw former N Dubz star Tulisa bring the party to the Nightingale And as you can tell from our pictures the crowd certainly loved it'

Birmingham's largest gay nightclub the Nightingale has drinks deals available and anthems galore!

*Check the back cover for more details

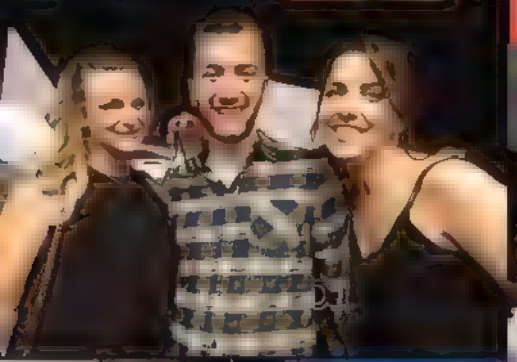






Tulisa poses with the Nig[illegible] team

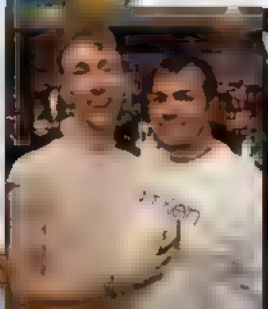
Tulisa with Birmingham's Yshee Black

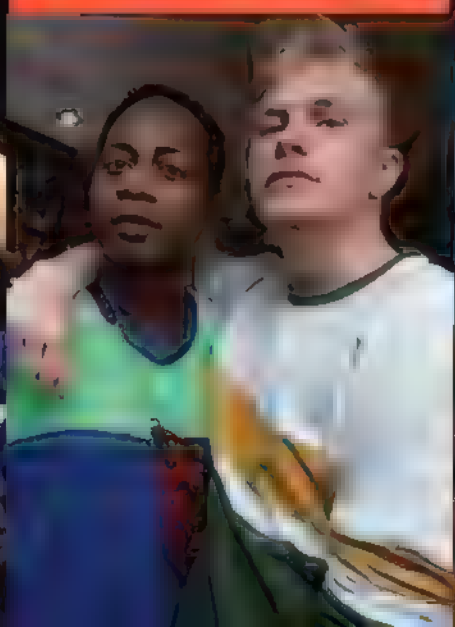


VILLAGE INN
BIRMINGHAM

Martha D'Arthur and Sandra London...

(see advert opposite for details).





MONDAYS

QUEENY'S BINGO
GUARANTEED
£120
WEEKLY
THE VILLAGE INN'S
L8R MONDAYS
£1 DRINKS
OPEN TO 4AM

TUESDAYS

PLAY YOUR
CARDS
RIGHT
WITH BLANCHE
CASH PRIZES

WEDNESDAYS

KARAOKE
WITH
PORKPIE

THURSDAYS

MISS MARTY'S
THIRSTY
THURSDAYS
CABARET
+ GAMES

SUNDAYS

YSHEE'S
BIG! BIG!
HAUS
PARTY
A NIGHT OF

NOVEMBER AT THE

VILLAGE INN BIRMINGHAM

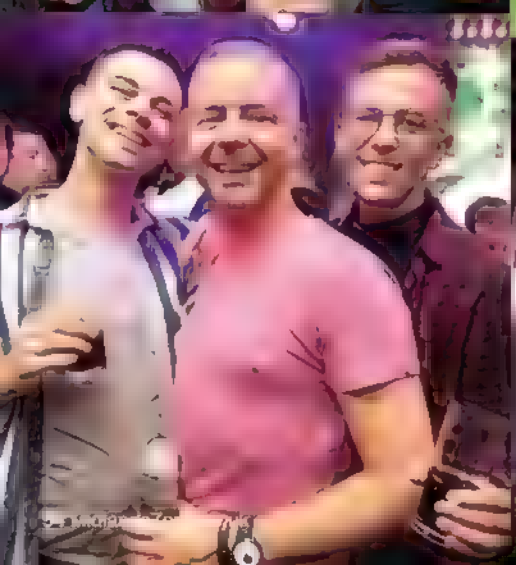
@VILLAGEBIRMINGHAM @THEVILLAGEBROM @VILLAGEBROM

EDEN BAR

October was another busy month for Birmingham's Eden Bar – just check out our photos of when the incredible Charlie Hides paid a visit to the venue!

This month sees Eden hosting a jam-packed programme that includes a Human League tribute band, Drag Punk's All Ages Drag Show, Birmingham Fetish Men and Kalon Rae.

(see advert opposite for more details)



QUIZZICAL! the smartphone QUIZ

WEDNESDAYS 8PM

WITH DJ YOGI SpeedQuizzing

KARAOKE & DISCO

EVERY FRIDAY & SUNDAY

WITH DJ NIKKI

NOVEMBER

eden

RuPaul

FRI 1ST THE HUMAN LEAGUE TRIBUTE BAND

SAT 2ND DANNY BEARD

SAT 9TH POPPYCOCK

SUN 10TH DRAG PUNK PRESENTS ALL AGES DRAG SHOW

THUR 14TH DANNY BEARD

FRI 15TH MIDS BEARS

SAT 16TH BFM B'HAM FETISH MEN

SUN 17TH LEATHER SOCIAL

TUE 19TH LGBT EVENT LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

THUR 21ST BRENDA LABEAU

FRI 22ND SEQUIN SHOW STOPPERS KALON RAE PLUS FULL SUPPORTING DRAG SHOW

SAT 23RD FANNY BURNS

SAT 30TH MARY MAC

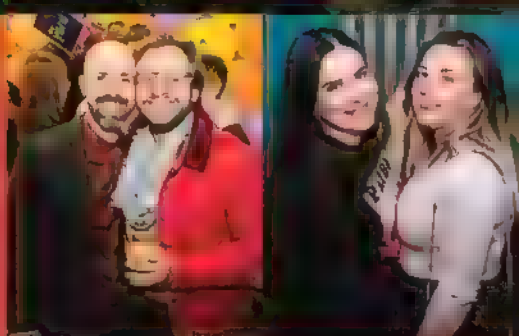
Ciné den 3PM SUN 17TH

den 3 PM SUN 24TH

DJ TONI LEE SAT 9TH

DJ PONI SAT 2ND SAT 16TH

Open from 2pm Mon-Fri 2pm Sat & Sun | 116 Sherlock St. Birmingham, B5 6NB | 0121 622 1953 | www.TheEdenBar.co.uk



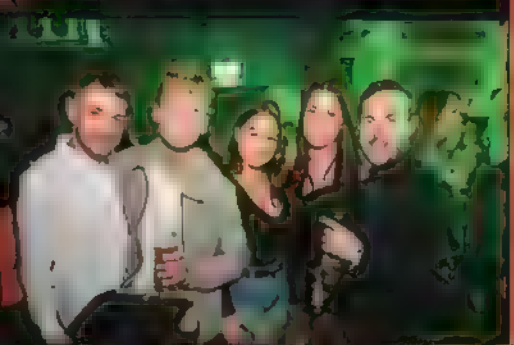
THE YARD

COVENTRY

The Yard in Coventry is always packed on a Friday night – and with top cabaret performers taking to the stage, that's really no surprise!

New for Fridays this month is Dirty Disco, playing the very best '80s music non-stop all night!

(see advert opposite for more details)



NON-STOP 80'S EVERY FRIDAY

LAUNCH PARTY 8TH NOVEMBER

DIRTY DISCO

THE BEST OF THE 80'S

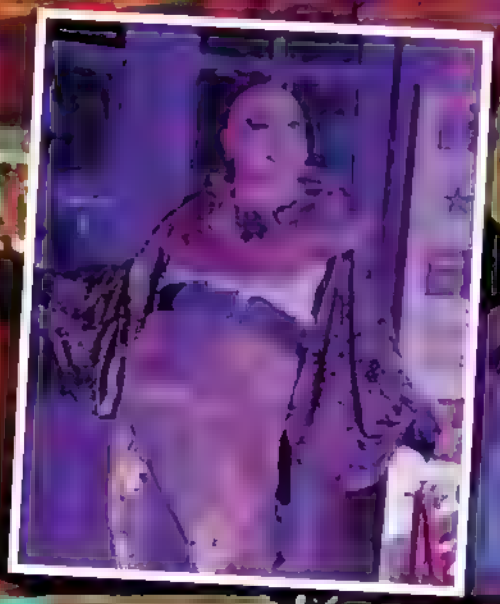
BRAND NEW DJ PLAYING GUILTY PLEASURES EVERY FRIDAY!

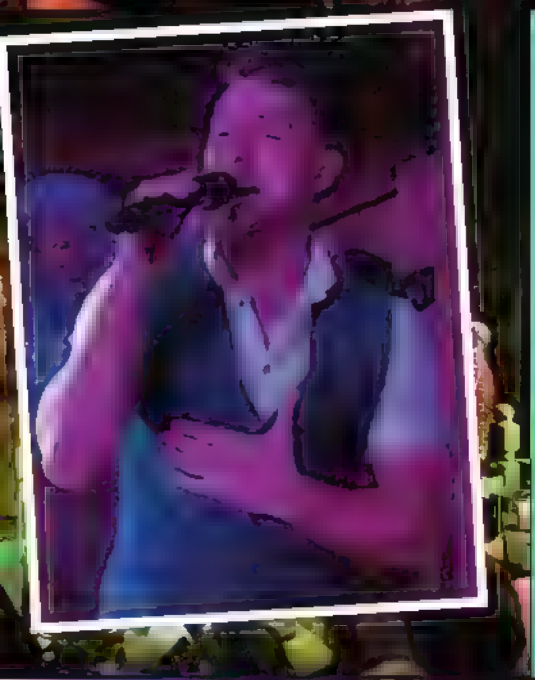
NOVEMBER CABARET

THEYARDCOVENTRY

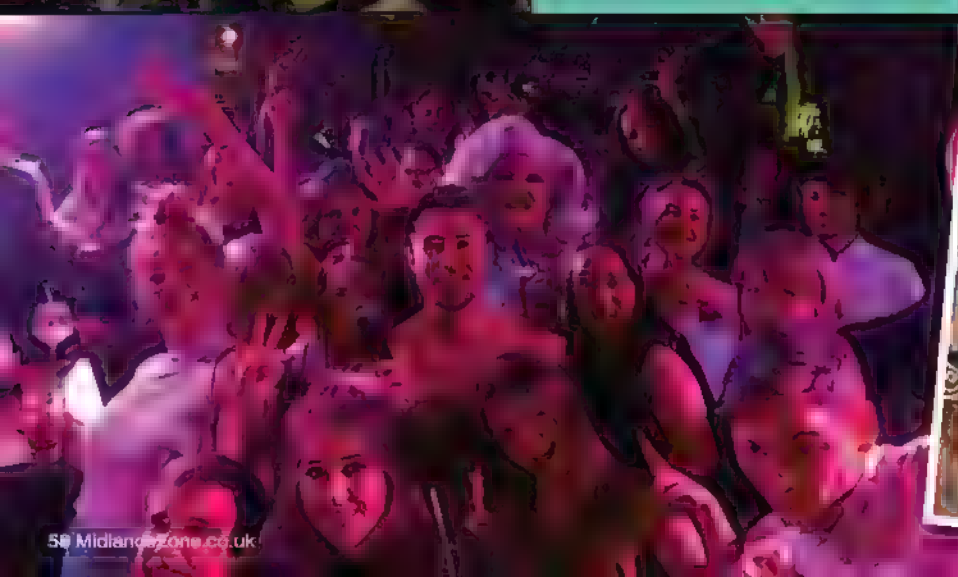
THEYARDCOVENTRY.CO.UK

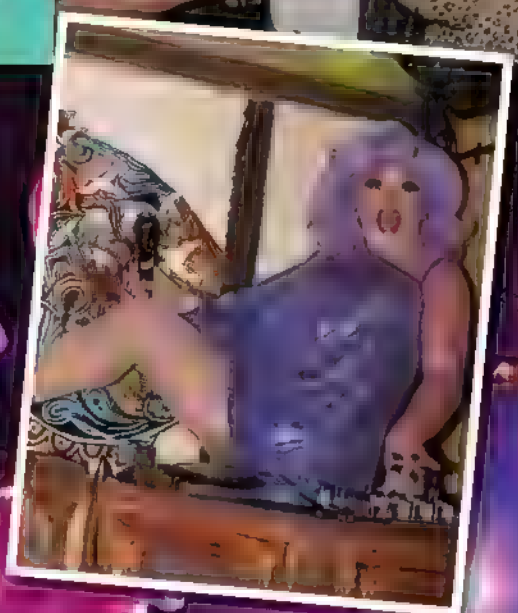
DRAG RACE UK LIVE EVERY THURSDAY FROM 8PM





HAVANA REPUBLIC





HAVANA ★ REPUBLIC

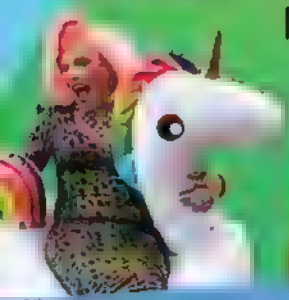
Miss Penny's

FABULOUS MONDAYS!

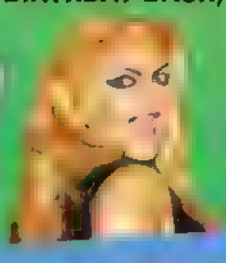
THE BIGGEST GAY MONDAY NIGHT OUT IN THE MIDLANDS

Special guest cabaret nights

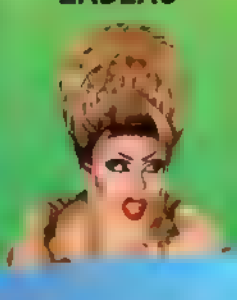
DR. BEV BALLCRUSHER



MARTY (MISS PENNY'S BIRTHDAY BASH)



BRENDA LABEAU



FREE ENTRY B4 12!

OPEN UNTIL 4AM!

GREAT £1 DRINKS

BAR DIVA

DUDLEY

October was another busy month for Dudley's top LGBT+ venue, Bar Diva.

November sees Miss Marty Tina Sparkle, Miss Thunderpussy and Miss Amber bring the cabaret to the club on Saturday night.

Friends of Dorothy will be making an appearance on Saturday 2 November, see advert opposite for more details.

BAR DIVA!

DUDLEY'S LGBT CABARET VENUE

THURSDAY'S	THIRSTY THURSDAY'S WITH MISS ANNIE & TRIXIE LEE
FRIDAY'S	FREAKY FRIDAY'S WITH DJ MIKEY
SATURDAY'S	CABARET SATURDAY'S TOP DRAGS & HOSTED BY MISS ANNIE
SUNDAY'S	RING & RIDE WITH MISS MOBILITY AND MARGARET FUN, GAMES AND PRIZES
MONDAY'S	MANIC MONDAY BOGOF KARAOKE WITH MISS ANNIE, HAPPY HOUR 8-1AM

BAR DIVA

Lower Plaza Mall King Street DY2 8NZ Dudley

ZONE AWARD WINNER

GORGEOUS

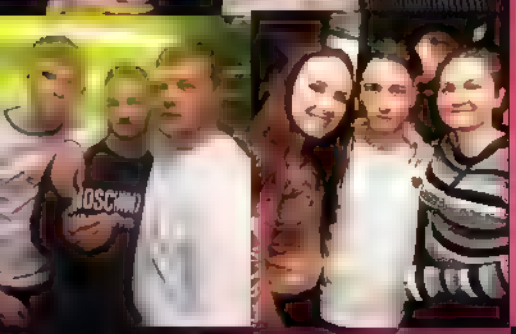
WOLVERHAMPTON

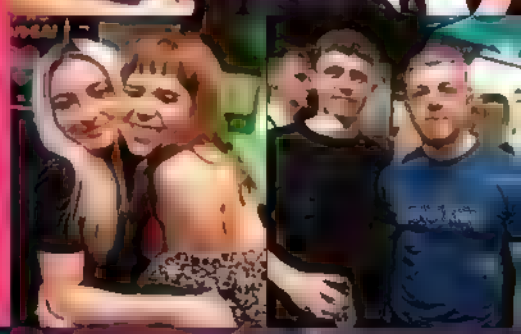
[redacted]

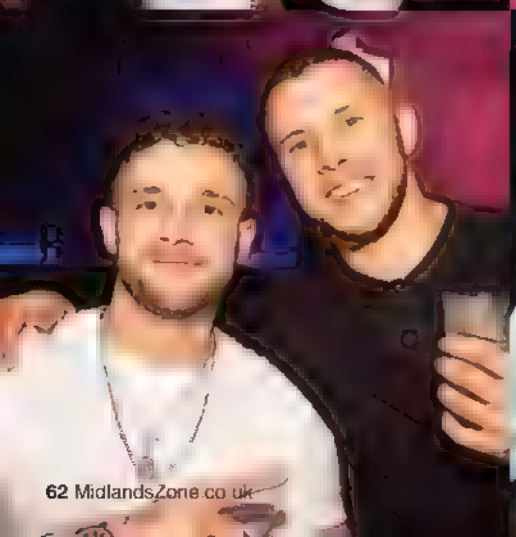
Ego, taking place every Saturday from 11pm till 6am.

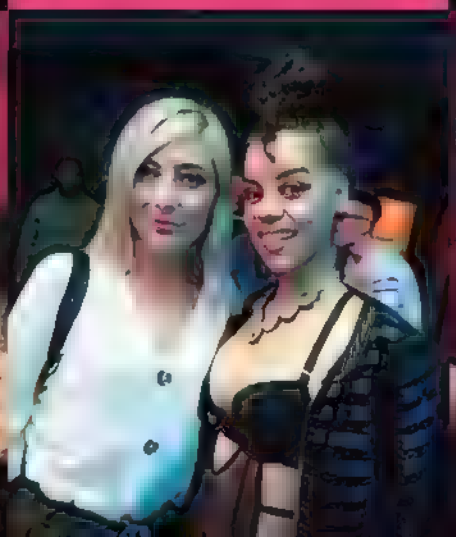
With a mashup of commercial R&B, [redacted] there's something for everyone.

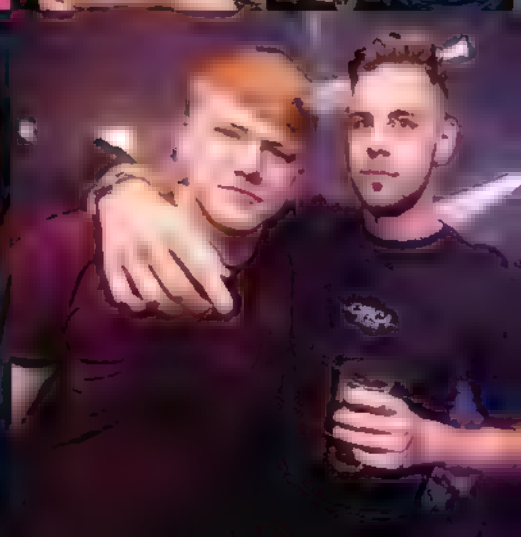
[redacted] drinks with a valid student ID card.











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(see advert below for more details)

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CIRCLE
BIRMINGHAM

Once a month The Loft hosts Circle Birmingham, a free-to-attend sober social event for the LGBTQ+ community.

The group engages in a variety of activities, including cinema trips, meditation and running.

Head to Circle Birmingham on Facebook to find out more about getting involved.

The next Circle social is set to take place on Sunday 24th November

Part of What's On MEDIA GROUP

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